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RUSSIAN REALITIES

JOHN HUBBACK

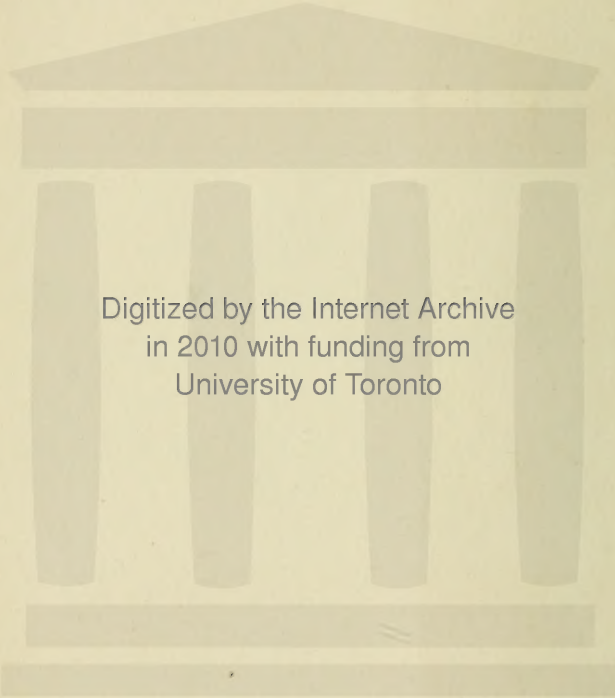


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RUSSIAN REALITIES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

JANE AUSTEN'S SAILOR BROTHERS
LIFE IN ARGENTINA



THE SPASSKIA GATE OF THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

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RUSSIAN REALITIES

BEING IMPRESSIONS GATHERED
DURING SOME RECENT
JOURNEYS IN RUSSIA BY
JOHN HUBBACK : :
WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

*"Russia is a real country, governed by real people,
with a real desire for progress."*

W. T. STEAD, "The Truth about Russia."

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TO MY FRIEND
ROBERT BUCHANAN
AT WHOSE INSTANCE
THESE RUSSIAN JOURNEYS
WERE UNDERTAKEN

PREFACE

SIXTY years ago there lived in one of the southern counties a lady well qualified by precedence and acres to take the lead in the country-side. To her came one day the Admiral's daughter, keen on doing something for the comfort of our soldiers then beginning a winter in the Crimea. Now the great lady was a cautious person, and she gave it as her opinion that to provide for the Queen's soldiers by private efforts might be derogatory to Her Majesty, and perhaps not a proper thing to do. Within a very few weeks Queen Victoria herself was organising work societies to alleviate the hardships at the front, and the great lady was in a state of desperation because she had missed an opportunity of fame as the patroness of the first branch of the Queen's Soldiers' Relief Society, as I think it was called.

Naturally we children in the Admiral's house heard a great deal of the Crimean War, and many were the discussions among our elders as to the mismanagement of the Transport Department and at the Admiralty, always a topic which excites members of naval families. Of course this family was represented out there. I remember seeing a cousin, then a lieutenant, who came home lame, because a ladderful of shipwrecked Turks had simply held on, and would do nothing to help the work of their rescuers. The man-o'-war's boat alongside the stranded ship got jammed against the weighted ladder in the seaway, and the leg was badly crushed. However, its owner lived to become an admiral in due time, so no permanent injury had happened. Our grandfather, his and mine, was just at this time offered the Portsmouth command as Port Admiral. The offer was most reluctantly declined on account of the Admiral's advanced age. As one of the few survivors in 1854 of Nelson's Band

of Brothers, he had much wished to hoist his flag at the main in the *Victory*.

We had read all about the landing at Eupatoria, the day of Alma, the taking of Balaclava Harbour, and the establishment there of naval men whom we boys had actually seen. After that came the wreck of the line-of-battle ship *Prince* with great loss of life, against that iron-bound coast. The joy with which the surrender of Sebastopol was received can well be imagined, and finally, by this time at the New Cross Naval School, I had a chance of seeing something of the Peace Illuminations in London. To be accurate, my point of observation was on the top of an omnibus which got blocked for hours in the crowded traffic, so my range was limited, to say the least.

Times have changed in many ways since then, yet some of these memories fit in with the great war now raging.

A story relating to the Crimean War was told by an old lady much endeared to me later in life, then resident in Brussels. Her

blanchisseuse came to her in a great state of mind, having heard that the French and English were fighting. The woman was old enough to remember the two nations as enemies ; “ Ah, Madame, viendront-ils finir la bataille à Waterloo ? ” To her Waterloo was the one and only decisive battlefield. Now we have seen all Belgium reduced to the state of devastation which was limited then to a single district.

The personal recollections in this volume are the result of eleven short visits to Russia, all within the last five years.

On several occasions my wife and I were together, and twice in 1914 I have been in company with my Belgian comrade.

Since he went into barracks at Brussels on the same day that we arrived from Russia, I had been unable to ascertain anything as to his welfare. In the closing days of the year I have heard from him, now sergeant in a line regiment of the “ Soldats Belges.”

31st December, 1914.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	ix
CHAPTER	
I. RUSSIA IN THE MAKING	3
II. EASTER EVE AT ODESSA	16
III. ODESSA AND INTO BESSARABIA	28
IV. POLAND	42
V. KIEFF	56
VI. HARBOURS OF SOUTH RUSSIA	67
VII. THE GREAT KURGAM	78
VIII. SOUTH RUSSIA IN SPRING	90
IX. SOUTH RUSSIA IN SUMMER	101
X. THE RUSSIAN CITY, AND CONCERNING MOSCOW	112
XI. NOVOROSSISK	127
XII. INTO CAUCASIA	139
XIII. SOMETHING ABOUT THE PEOPLE	153
XIV. POLTAVA	170

CHAPTER	PAGE
XV. ROSTOFF-ON-DON AND A RED CROSS HOSPITAL	179
XVI. THE COUNTRY OF THE KALMUCKS	190
XVII. THE WHEAT FIELDS OF THE VOLGA	202
XVIII. A RUSSIAN FOLLOWER OF ROOSEVELT	217
XIX. YALTA AND THE BAIDAR GATE	228
XX. ROUND ABOUT SEBASTOPOL	237
XXI. THE GERMAN IN RUSSIA	246
XXII. THREE DAYS BEFORE THE WAR	257
INDEX	273

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE SPASSKIA GATE OF THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH AND THE MONASTERY AT	FACING PAGE
INKERMAN, ROCK CHAMBERS	12
ON THE VISTULA AT WARSAW	48
NORBERTINER MONASTERY NEAR CRACOW (ON THE	
VISTULA)	52
BOIMOV CHAPEL, LVOFF (LEMBERG), GALICIA . . .	54
CATHEDRAL IN THE LAVRA MONASTERY, KIEFF . .	58
THE GREAT KURGAM WITH MONUMENTS, KERTCH .	80
ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL, MOSCOW (BUILT BY IVAN	
THE TERRIBLE)	114
THE IBERIAN GATE, MOSCOW	116
THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW	122
MOUNT KASBEK, CAUCASUS	140
ON THE GEORGIAN MILITARY ROAD, DESCENT ON THE	
SOUTH SIDE OF THE CAUCASUS, AT MLETY . . .	150
KALMUCK HUTS ON THE VOLGA, NEAR ASTRACHAN .	192
AT A FERRY, ON THE VOLGA (KALMUCK TYPES) . .	208
FROM THE BAIDAR GATE, THE BLACK SEA . . .	232
BALACLAVA HARBOUR	242
MAP OF RUSSIA.	

RUSSIAN REALITIES

RUSSIAN REALITIES

CHAPTER I

RUSSIA IN THE MAKING

MR. G. K. CHESTERTON has said that "we may think of anything, down to a fallen acorn, as a descendant or an ancestor." The vast Empire which we know as "All the Russias" has been the outcome of many fallen acorns, and has had many ancestors which have taken their own part in the production of the consolidated realm existing to-day.

Some of the components have long histories, others are of comparatively recent origin. Some enter definitely into the story of the ages past, and there are those whose development is comparable to that of the oak sapling

still drawing upon the acorn for some of its sustenance.

Petrograd as the modern capital, Moscow as the medieval seat of power, are enduring witnesses of important phases, but do not stand for more than a portion of the process of making Russia.

When Alfred reigned in England and had to fight the Northmen, another tribe of these Northmen took up the sovereignty in Central Russia, though without any definitely established capital. Their Prince or Grand Duke, as he was variously named, was resident, now at Vladimir, now at Kieff, and the extent of his dominion was generally limited to the region adjoining his residence. Quite in early days, while the sons of the Conqueror held England and Normandy, there were self-governing cities in Russia free from the sway of the Northmen. Novgorod the Great was the most notable example, and some of the architecture of its palmy days is still preserved. There was a bad time coming for Russia, and these early advances

towards popular government were soon to be overwhelmed by the invasion of the Tartars or Mongols, who established their supremacy everywhere, in city and in hamlet, making serfs of the free peasants and exacting tribute from the descendants of Rurik the Northman. The succeeding centuries were devoted by these vassals of the Mongol to efforts for the recovery of independence. This was at last accomplished, so far as the ruling families were concerned, after Moscow had become their head-quarters, and Ivan III then married the daughter of the last Greek Emperor in Constantinople. In the next age the reign of the better-known Ivan the Terrible brought Russia into contact with England, as some trade was established and courtesies exchanged by the route of Archangel, which resulted in an offer of marriage by Ivan himself, now Tsar, to Queen Elizabeth. He seems to have been quickly consoled when the Queen of England had declined the honour. Ivan the Terrible was the last effective sovereign of the Rurik line, and a

period of disorder followed, chiefly caused by the attacks of the Poles, then a powerful and warlike nation. The Polish arms had on several occasions been carried as far as Moscow itself, and they were not finally routed until the Russian nobles united against the invaders. There was a boyar named Theodore, connected with one of the consorts of Ivan the Terrible. This Theodore had done much to heal the dissensions between his fellow nobles and was the choice of the best among them for the Tsardom. A sudden usurpation of power by the opposing party resulted in Theodore's banishment from Court, and in his being compelled to become a monk in the monastery of Kostroma, while his wife also had to take the vows, but was allowed to have the charge of their young son Michael. Theodore took the name of Philarete, and had the privilege of ruling the monastery for a time. But he was soon called upon to take an active part in the endeavour to get the Poles to leave Moscow, and headed a deputation to their king to

propose terms of settlement. The whole of the embassy were made prisoners, and this proved to all good Russians at the Court the necessity of united action. So they sent at once to Kostroma to offer the crown to the young Michael Romanoff, the son of Philarete, and after much reluctance on his mother's part and his own, he was elected Tsar at the age of sixteen. When his father was released from captivity in Poland, the Tsar conferred the Bishopric of Moscow upon Philarete, so that father and son were practically associated in the government of Church and State.

Michael had his own ways of doing things later in life. It is told of him that, when his daughter Irene was marriageable, among other suitors came Waldemar, a prince of Denmark, by invitation to the Tsar's Court. The Prince was not attracted, and the Tsar thereupon put him in prison.

Although the allied kingdoms of Poland and Sweden were not so persistent henceforward in their attacks upon the Tsar, the Russian power

did not gain very much strength or new territory, excepting in Siberia, until the reign of Peter the Great. His contemporaries were our William III and Queen Anne, and in some respects he was imbued with Western ideas. Peter was the real founder of the Russian Empire as we know it, for all that had preceded his reign had been in some measure inconclusive and its results unstable. But this Tsar was of another sort. His activity and perseverance have left their marks in all the regions which came under his rule. It is perhaps enough to say that he extended Russia on the one side to his new capital of Petrograd, and on the other to the shores of the Caspian Sea at Astrachan. He seems to have visited even the most distant of his acquisitions, and to have done much everywhere to bring things into order, according to his own ideas. That his descendants, those of Philarete and of Michael Romanoff, are the Imperial Family of Russia to-day is a fact which forms the best memorial of his greatness. The unity of purpose between Tsar and

people in this war serves to show the solidity of the national foundations laid by Peter the Great.

Though this epitome may give some idea of the building up of the central fabric of Empire, there are other regions of Russia which have had quite a different story. In such a limited scope as this sketch affords, it is not possible to touch on more than one instance of the varied experiences now forming united history under the Russian tri-colour. It is proposed to take this example from the shores of the Black Sea in general and from the Crimea in particular.

Age after age came the long processions of fleets, each with its own characteristic form of sail, the watchmen eagerly looking for the first sight of the Crimean Mountains. Along the southern shore Homer brought his hero Odysseus, telling of his experiences with the Laestrygonians, who seem to have been dwellers on the margin of Balaclava Harbour. Another tradition of the poetic age of Hellas told of the temple of Iphigenia

in Tauris, sought by Orestes in the land still called Taurida by its Russian rulers. We are told on good classical authority that the city of Miletus had eighty colonies on these Black Sea coasts far more than two thousand years ago. One wonders what sort of people raised all those hundreds of mounds on the low hills of eastern Crimea, so many that every sky-line is notched with the burial-place of some worthy whose name and manner of speech have faded away. Some of these resting-places have steep sides which afford pasture, some have gentler slopes, covered each summer time with golden corn.

Miletus lost its independence and its sea power when the overwhelming armies of Persia came in like a flood, and Athens claimed rule over the derelict settlements along these coasts. For how many centuries did the Athenian convoys trade with Chersonese, wind-swept then as now? The remains of Corinthian column and massive wall seem to point to a long dominion by the classic Greek.

Then came other and more shadowy forms, a succession of kings, each bearing the title of Mithridates; these potentates had their central abode on the hill overlooking Kertch, then occupied by the extensive city of Pantacapeion spreading far up the long valley where is now the isolated railway station. This flourishing Athenian colony, with that of Theodosia, perhaps suffered but little from the sway of these rulers, who maintained temples of Zeus and other objects of Athenian cults. To this unrecorded period succeeded a real dominion when the Roman eagles were borne ashore, and the legion followed, just as happened a century later in our own land when Julius Cæsar came. The Pax Romana spread along the Black Sea shores, destined to endure until Constantine had set up his new capital on the Bosphorus. To the Crimea came Clement, Bishop of Rome, exiled by the Emperor Trajan and sent to work in the quarries of the Inkerman of to-day. The tradition is that the fellow exiles, converted by Clement's teaching and

example, hewed out the church in the rock still existing and dedicated to St. Clement.

Doubtless there were many local assaults of the barbarian in all those nine hundred years during which Constantinople was the great city, the secure centre of Empire. At all events, Greek learning and Christian teaching flourished on these fertile shores, and records implying immense populations seem to find corroboration in the elaborate and important plans of defensive works. The Venetians came, and their rivals the Genoese, and the degenerate Greeks made allies of each in turn and each set plundered, finally taking possession of the cities left to themselves. No doubt the Cæsar in Constantinople did what he could to protect the outlying portions of his diminished Empire, but his best was not very much. Perhaps, too, his subjects were not very sorry to have fresh champions against the marauders from the steppes. To this day the "towers along the steep" tell of the strong hand of the Genoese alike at Balaclava, at Theodosia, and above



ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH AND THE MONASTERY AT INKERMEN
(ROCK CHAMBERS)

the Inkerman quarries. Neither "Genoa's bow nor Cæsar's eagle shield" sufficed to keep the fierce Tartar at bay, and the Genoese had to hoist sail and leave to the conqueror their forts at Chersonese, thus following in the wake of the Venetian galleys which earlier abandoned the Black Sea. The victorious Tartars, like many eastern races ignorant of the advantages of sea power, allowed the coast towns to go to decay. They settled themselves inland with their capital at Batchisserai, where the Emir's "Palace of the Garden" is still an object of interest. The Tartar was not very long an unquestioned ruler, for the Turk was too strong for him and made the Emir a subordinate. It did not suit the Turks to go far from the coast, so they took up their quarters on the fertile slopes that fringe the modern Vorontsoff road from Yalta towards Sebastopol, and built the Baidar Gate at the crest of the pass across the mountains. They aimed at keeping their Tartar vassals in check in case of their giving trouble. The

Turks held the greater part of the Black Sea coast in what is now South Russia, until the Empress Catherine began her enterprises in this direction.

She speedily bundled out the representatives of the Sultan, bag and baggage, and set to work to build Odessa and Sebastopol in place of the previous settlements, which, like Batchisserai, had scarcely exceeded the status of villages.

Still another episode in the long drama of Crimean story is one that is familiar to most Englishmen, even though the siege of Sebastopol is now chiefly a matter of history. Then the Allies were the French, the British, the Sultan of Turkey and the Sardinian King, soon to be ruler of all Italy. To this generation it seems a curious medley of forces which are so differently distributed to-day.

Once again Crimean shores echo the attack of hostile fleets. The flag of the Turkish Empire has been employed in covering the characteristically German attempts to destroy undefended sea-coast towns.

Yet there is good hope that the alliance of the Triple Entente Powers may result in making war less likely, and that the Red, White and Blue, common to all three flags, may always symbolise peaceful progress, when once the disturbers are dealt with.

The making of Russia has advanced so far that the military power of the German Empire is challenged, and it will continue, with augury of benefit to the world at large.

CHAPTER II

EASTER EVE AT ODESSA

RUSSIAN churches are very similar everywhere; their domes and pinnacles are in Irkutsk just what they are in Sebastopol, and the majority of the 150 millions of Russians belong to the Orthodox Communion. It is not easy to realise the existence of an immense community of Christians such as this is, who hold the same beliefs as English Churchmen do, who repeat the same Creed, and who keep the same Church Festivals and seasons. Here in England there is a perennial difficulty in imagining such uniformity; it is perhaps part of the natural inclination of Englishmen and Scotchmen to differ about religious observances even when their real opinions are practically identical. Of course there are

foreigners and descendants of foreigners who have made their homes in Russia and who have brought with them their own usages. They are free to do as they believe, to worship in their own way, for no Russian would think of interfering with them. But this by no means touches the Russians themselves, for the daily life of the people is based on their religion, which comes out in the actions of every class and calling. On entering Russia the first railway station shows this quite clearly, and the same thing is constantly repeated. In the waiting-hall there is usually a sacred picture with a lamp burning before it day and night, and the Russian makes his obeisance as he comes near ; many a one halts for a prayer or a thanksgiving, for commendation to holy guidance during the journey to come or acknowledgment for one safely ended. No time or place is considered unsuitable for religious meditation or devotion. In a restaurant the sacred picture with its perpetual illumination is openly recognised as the Russian proceeds to say his grace

before meat. In the hotel bedroom and in the steamer's saloon hangs the icon, and it is evident that to these people the sacred emblem is the central point. Alike in cottage and in barrack, in hospital and in palace, it occupies the place of honour. The influence of their religion makes itself felt in every phase of existence, it colours the life of the people, it operates in the government of the country, in the national idea respecting their Tsar, and in the mode of life of the Tsar himself.

It may be said that if they are so religious in Russia they should not allow so much oppression and tyranny as is reported to exist. There was oppression in this country during many centuries, and it was often carried on in the name of religion. It must be remembered that Russia is in many respects a young country, that the government is far from ideal, and that repression or prohibition of many things that seem to us desirable are parts of the experimental attempts to manage so vast a territory, so enormous a population. In the writer's

opinion, based on much observation, Russians are almost as free to live their own lives as are people in this country, and certainly much freer than Frenchmen or Germans. Not all that is said about tyranny is true.

As I have already mentioned, the Russian churches, large and small, cathedral and village sanctuary, are nearly all built on one general design. The same plan of a cruciform edifice is carried out generally, and the exterior is white with one or more green domes. Sometimes the domes are gilded and the façades are decorated with really beautiful sacred paintings. In the interior the choir or chancel is screened off by a very lofty partition, sometimes filling up the arch completely. On this screen are a number of paintings, generally scenes from the life of Our Lord or of the Apostles or of other Saints in later ages. Full-length figures of St. Nicholas, the Patron Saint of Russia, and of St. Clement, who suffered death in the Crimea, occur very frequently together, especially in South Russia. The screen is

called the Iconostasis, being the stand or framework for the pictures. In the Orthodox Churches no carved statue is permissible, so they have only paintings. Many of these are decorated with gold and silver and jewels, offerings from the faithful of past and present generations.

Excepting some few for invalids there are no seats in any of the churches. All stand on the paved floor or kneel at the same moment, as prescribed by their service-books. It is a great experience to hear the hymns and the antiphons of the whole congregation, unaccompanied by any instrumental music. All the music in the Eastern Church is vocal, and mostly the result is melodious, for they become accustomed to their part-singing from the time when as children they begin to go to church. It may be judged that people who make so much of their religious privileges as the Russians do will be disposed to keep the Church seasons strenuously. Easter is to them the Day of Days, Lent and Passion-tide seem to be

realities in a very special way and are accompanied by some ceremonials unknown in Western Europe. We have very scanty records of the actual Liturgy used by the earliest Christians, whose language was in most cases Greek with some Hebrew phrases employed in their worship. The Russian language is partly founded upon classic Greek, and it sometimes comes to one in listening to their "Kyrie Eleison" or their Alleluias, that these have the spirit of the first Christians, that the Russian enters into the understanding and traditions of those days, albeit unconsciously. The actual words of the Liturgy are in the old Slavonic dialect, familiar to Russians from childhood.

A year or two ago we spent the period from Wednesday in Holy Week until Easter Day was past in Odessa. We were greatly interested in all that was going on, and frequently visited the great cathedral which forms the central point of the city. We were informed that on Thursday evening, at dusk, it was the custom throughout Russia to

inaugurate the ceremony of blessing the lights. This function seems to be symbolic of Our Lord's words, "I am the Light of the World," and the hour of the service points to that conclusion. For the anniversary of the Crucifixion is imminent, and the Light of the World was then darkened until Easter morning. So the church provides consecrated lights from which everyone may take illuminations for their own homes, typifying thereby the light of the Gospel for the faithful.

Thousands and thousands of the people brought their candles and lanterns to be lighted from the consecrated flame, and after the ceremony was over and the litanies sung, they streamed away in all directions and carried their lights through the streets with the utmost care. The lantern covers are decorated with sacred subjects or with patterns, of course illuminated by the light within. Very large numbers of candles are carried with a frill of paper as the sole protection from the wind, and the sight is most striking and curious. When they reach their

homes the lamp before the icon is lit, and the candle brought from the church is put out and laid by carefully for later use, to be shortly mentioned.

Good Friday came, the Great Friday as they call it, and these people seemed to spend much of their time in the churches which were thronged throughout the day. The hours of the Crucifixion were strictly observed, and at three o'clock a catafalque was placed in every church. To this central point came long lines, all waiting to say their prayers in the place which symbolises the Holy Sepulchre. The same scene went on without intermission through all the evening hours of Friday and was renewed for the whole day on Easter Eve. The crowds were perfectly quiet, there was no irreverence anywhere, for all are bent on the same errand. Some brought offerings to place on the tomb, such as flowers; we noticed a child laying down his orange. Close beside the catafalque stood a shrouded cross with painted figure, very much like some of the early Masters' representations of the

Crucifixion in the Florentine Galleries, which indicate many signs of Byzantine influence, the head and front of Russian ecclesiastical art. There was very little light in the church, for the lamps were low and the candles few.

So passed Saturday before Easter up to ten o'clock at night, when the stream of people again began to flow into the churches, and half an hour later all of them were filled. It must be remembered that there is only standing room, no seats whatever. At the cathedral every corner was packed with people, and these Odessa churches are all large; probably there were five thousand in the cathedral.

A special reservation is made for officials and their friends, and we had obtained entrance to this transept, whence we could see all that followed. The reserved area gradually filled up with officers in full military, naval, or diplomatic uniform, and their ladies all in white or in pale-coloured dresses, everyone decidedly in best array to do honour to the occasion. About half-past eleven the Archbishop of Odessa came up

from the west door of the church, vested in purple. He was a very old man and feeble-looking. He was supported by two of his clergy, one on each side, and after him followed the procession of clergy and of officials of the cathedral. When he came to the catafalque under the central dome, he knelt down for a minute just in the same way that the continuous stream of people had been doing all day.

After those in the procession had followed his example, all of them passed on through the gates into the sanctuary, and the choir began a litany which was succeeded by a hymn in which the great congregation took their part. In the intervals when the choir was silent the stillness of the whole assembly was remarkable; one could scarcely believe that the church was full to overflowing. The catafalque was now removed altogether, the gates of the sanctuary were opened and the procession came forth again, the Archbishop wearing a jewelled mitre and vestments of white and gold. Now the choir and some of

the congregation also joined in the procession, which went down to the west door and all round the outside of the cathedral, singing as they went, "They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him." This was what the procession was symbolising; they find that the tomb is taken away; they go on further to look for it; they go outside and then they come back. Up the nave of the cathedral came the long array, the choir took its place again, the clergy formed lines on each side, and the Archbishop approached the empty platform under the dome. Then he spoke: "Christ is Risen." The announcement was made four times as he faced each quarter of the cathedral. There was a long sigh of relief from tension throughout the church, a stir, and then the candles that they had taken home on Thursday night were alight in the hands of the people all round the cathedral. The great chandeliers were ablaze overhead in a moment, a large cross above the iconostasis shone out with electric light, and the

choir took up the anthem, "He is Risen indeed." The Archbishop passed again into the sanctuary and began the Eucharistic Service, after a hymn and some antiphons had been sung by the choir in its place and the clergy inside the sanctuary alternately. Most of our uniformed neighbours and the ladies now held large red wax candles, and the festival of Easter had begun. Towards one o'clock we found our way out of the cathedral and encountered a remarkable sight in the great square. It was filled with crowds of people carrying their lights. There were many promenaders further on, and even parties sitting out as if it were a summer night. To us the temperature seemed quite sufficiently cold, but then we had not experienced a Russian winter. All the streets as we went towards our domicile were still crowded with those who had been in one or other of the churches, and with the glimmer of their lanterns ended one of the most remarkable sights that we had ever witnessed.

CHAPTER III

ODESSA AND INTO BESSARABIA

THE city of Odessa has very little to remind one of past days. It is essentially modern, and its busy streets with the rapid circulation of traffic are indications of its great importance amongst Russian towns. It is a pleasant sensation on arrival from the long overland journey to see the wide expanse of the Black Sea away to the horizon. One may feel that a good deal has been accomplished, and that there is a new set of surroundings, a fresh experience in life.

The little droschky that will scarcely hold two passengers travels along the thoroughfares at a great pace. It has not even a back to the seat, and when one rattles over the cobblestones it seems safer to hold on tight for fear of being capsized. The driver is

invariably of ample proportions, and they say that this appearance is caused by a rivalry between members of the profession as to the number of coats which they can wear at the same time. The fares for the ordinary town journeys are so low that it is rather wonderful how they can manage to buy so many clothes, but the climate is severe enough at times for any number of garments to be acceptable. The population is cosmopolitan; there are representatives of many parts of Russia, especially Poles, and there are many Turks, Greeks, and Jews. These three nationalities form the chief part of the resident foreigners. British subjects are mostly members of families who have lived for a generation or two in Russia. There are also large contingents of German-speaking people, long established in the country. The trade along the coasts of the Black Sea is very large both southward and eastward, and passengers for many destinations crowd the boats, which are as a rule well found and comfortable, while the commissariat is in capable

hands. We seem to be very near to the Unchanging East in watching the strange medley of Orientals who travel by the steamer for Batoum or Poti, far-off bournes in the land where Jason sought the Golden Fleece. That they are uninspiring places to-day does not make the glamour of the road to Persia any the less. When these Orientals are in their best clothes they are worth looking at. One may see them sometimes with the turban decorated by jewels and with wonderfully coloured stuffs of delicate texture, and then next morning on the boat it would be a bad bargain to give a couple of roubles for their whole attire. The other day, when the Balkan War was in full strength, the kingdom of Roumania closed its frontiers against all comers, and Odessa for a time became the halting-place for people bound to Constantinople. One of our King's Messengers was *en route* when I was calling on the Consul-General and he mentioned that it made just two days' difference in the length of his fortnightly journey. "That," he remarked,

“is a consideration when you are on your hundredth trip, and I do not care how soon Roumania lets us go through again.” I do not know whether this particular gentleman still carries despatches between London and Constantinople ; it must be a lengthy transit at this present stage of the war in Europe. At all events, he knew how to get about with the minimum of discomfort, for he had his cabin accommodation on the return steamer and his compartment in the train towards England duly booked before he left Odessa. I find that my own arrangements for these long journeys are looked upon as tolerably complete, but I could not pretend to vie with a King’s Messenger. For one thing I have not the same fixed routes, but simply go to the places and at the times when I consider that my visit may be required.

Odessa has no river nearer than the Dniester outflow at some distance along the Black Sea shore, and the railway communication has not until now kept pace with the requirements of grain people, so that the port has lost its former

supremacy in this business. There is so large an increase in the interior population of South Russia that much more bread is wanted up-country. The towns there have developed rapidly with the establishment of new manufacturing industries, and the villages have spread out chiefly in consequence of the relaxation of the communal system of land tenure. They are always building new Army barracks round Odessa; it is impossible to say what number of soldiers are maintained there in peace time, but it is officially the head-quarters of two Army Corps. These were mobilised immediately on the presentation of the Austrian Ultimatum to Servia on the 23rd July, when there was as yet no interference on the part of Germany recognisable, and when hopes of a settlement between Austria and Russia might well have been justified. From actual observation along the frontiers I had recognised the existence of large numbers of mobilised troops, both Austrian and Russian, in the early spring of 1913, yet differences were amicably settled then,

and the soldiers returned to their quarters after obviously suffering much hardship during their winter in camp. The Russian soldier seems to have but little rest even in peace time, as drilling and marching are continuous near the towns, while scouting parties and the occupation of positions are constantly the subjects of interest as one travels through the country districts. The severity of the training seems, however, to have been of great advantage in the field.

The neighbourhood of Odessa inland is mostly steppe or shelving plain ; the sea-coast is composed of earth-cliffs, really the margin of those steppes which once extended far out, where now there are shallows or sand-banks. Here and there some sheltered valley is reached where a stream comes out and the sides of the ravine are made beautiful in spring by great banks of the Crimean iris in many shades of colour.

The disrepair noticeable as to doors and fences in these suburbs seems to be an attribute of the Russian, and even when a general

straightening-up takes place it is apt to stop short of completeness. An imposing new stone wall may stand for months without the posts necessary for the large iron gate already visible on the premises, or lacking continuity with other parts of the fence protecting the garden.

Caught in a shower afield we took shelter in the cottage at a railway crossing, and were interested in the interior arrangements explained by the signal-woman. The stove built into the wall, with contiguous oven, led to the question as to the method of obtaining fuel. The woman said that she was allowed ten old railway sleepers every month and a few extra in winter. Five or six loaves of rye bread on the shelf were the visible results to which she pointed. Excepting some chickens running about promiscuously, there was no other food to be seen, but of course she had her samovar somewhere for tchai.

In the train we had met with a young Russian priest and his wife who were bound

for Bender, his parish being in that neighbourhood. Both of them were particularly well got up, and were quite ready to talk pleasantly of their Bessarabian dwelling and their garden in a fertile land. We came to the conclusion that his cassock and her summer overall were made from the same piece of material, whitish in colour and of fine texture.

We were then on our way to the Limans or salt lakes, whose azure surface can be well viewed from the cliffs that fringe them. Their tint is in sharp contrast with the deeper colours of the sea beyond, and with the brown and gold of the steppe which lies outspread above the further shore a mile away. They say that these Limans were once river-channels which underwent vital changes when they lost their outlet to the sea. If they were really at one time filled with fresh water in motion the alteration is very marked and complete. For now they are far down in gigantic trenches, and the water is salt, even saltier than that of the Black Sea. There is

no serious current, for the streams inflowing are only small, so the climate must have become much drier since the days when a river rivalling the Dniester rolled down the channel now represented by the Hadji Beski Liman. It is hard to believe that there ever existed a set of conditions so widely differing from those of to-day. We fell to watching how the breezes flecked the surface into wide patches of alternate blue and silver, and how these again were varied into many delicate shades where sand-banks came nearly up to the water-level, for the Liman is nowhere of any great depth. A few hours' walk along the steppe on the margin of the cliffs made one acquainted with much that is scarcely known to the casual visitor in these parts, for I was well guided by an old resident of Odessa, who takes interest in every sight and sound of the countryside.

Along the higher part of the cliff are scattered many shrubs, such as roses, tamarisk or euonyma, with here and there a well-grown oak or beech. None of these are indigenous

to the country, nor can they be found in an uncultivated state. The explanation of their presence is that the Turk who still dwelt in this land two hundred years ago was more appreciative of the fresh breezes and the wide outlook than are the inhabitants of Odessa to-day. There must have been a continuous line of bungalows here for the rich Turkish officials; no doubt they were accustomed to ride out attended by their suites. The cliffs are irregular, sometimes nearly perpendicular, but more often seamed and furrowed deeply by the winter storms and by melting snows. At some places they quarry bright-coloured stone which comes in for the new bungalows that are now springing up on the lower shore of the Liman. So far there has been a marked tendency on the part of Odessa residents to keep to certain suburbs and to avoid going out to isolated houses; perhaps the tendency has been accentuated by the troubles that occurred just after the Japanese War.

It had been seriously debated as we came along the steppe whether we should take a

boat and explore further up the Liman, but the point was solved for us by the entire absence of any boat or boatman.

The saltness of the Liman water is most beneficial to rheumatic people. It is rather pitiful and yet not without encouragement to watch the patients of the various hydro-pathic establishments limping along the shore to their bathing-places, or making their painful way up again to the quarters where they are under strict supervision by the doctors. Some of the houses provide treatment almost gratuitously. The Liman being so salt seldom freezes over even when the surface of the Black Sea for a mile or more outside Odessa becomes practicable for walking or driving, which happens at intervals of some winters. The sand-bars that formed at the lower end of the Limans are now flourishing market gardens, full of the results of the intensive cultivation possible in the hot summers of South Russia.

One of the most interesting journeys from Odessa is that to Galatz or to Braila on the

Danube, and the transit can be made either by direct steamer to Galatz or by rail through Bessarabia. The water journey is much the pleasanter of the two, but perhaps the other route is more instructive as it takes a long detour. After many hours of travel through a country of maize fields and vineyards, one of the former frontiers of Roumania is reached at a point where a much older boundary line had been fixed. The railway station is still Trojanvall, or Trajan's Wall, where the Roman Empire reached its utmost limit among the Dacians. There was a certain idea of the fitness of things in drawing the boundary of the Roumans at this point, since that nation does its best to justify its descent from Roman colonists of those lands, and is now eager to include the whole of its kinsfolk of Transylvania within its territory. However, its great neighbour would not agree to the Trojanvall frontier, and now the Danube divides the Russian and the Roumanian sentries. We thought that both sets must have a poor time of it, keeping guard in those

marsh lands which fringe the Kilia mouth of the great river. From what can be ascertained, the transferred population, though they are Roumans by race and language, do not seriously object to Russian rule, seeing that the experience of their forefathers included a long period of Turkish dominion.

Whether the land route or the steamer from Odessa is chosen, the last Russian town is Reni, whence Galatz can be seen at no great distance. I had been travelling by the railway in the company of a Russian Consul-General of those parts who was returning to his duties in Roumania, when he quite casually remarked to me that there was formerly a railway bridge between Reni and Galatz. He went on to say that he could not imagine why it was not replaced, as it involved much time and trouble to cross the river Pruth in a ferry-boat. I presume that he did not give me credit for a somewhat clear remembrance of the events of the Russo-Turkish War. When Russian armies advanced to the attack, the first movement of the invaders was to

cross this bridge and to occupy both Galatz and Braila, thereby making sure of the co-operation of the Roumanian army.

It was scarcely wonderful that when the Roumanians regained the control of their own affairs they immediately destroyed the bridge. They were not inclined to have any more Russians coming that way.

CHAPTER IV

POLAND

WHEN the Tsar, at the outset of the present war, issued his memorable proclamation to the people of Poland, he declared in the most definite way that Poland is a living entity, that Polish nationality is one and indivisible even now after the long domination of the partitioning powers. Although it is manifestly to the interest of Russia to include Posen and Galicia within her boundary, yet that aspect of the position is not the most important one. The impression conveyed by visits to the country has been a clear one: that the Poles are one people, whether they have lived beneath the Russian, the Austrian, or the German flag. To travel from Posen by way of Cracow or Warsaw to Lemberg is to

hear one language, to study one style of national architecture—in fact, it is to realise the unity of the people. Though the name of Poland had almost disappeared from the map, though it would be difficult to say what is the flag of Poland, nevertheless Poles abroad or at home lose none of their hope of better days to come. The ever-changing scenes of conflict during the last five months of 1914 have devastated great areas, but have done nothing to shake the spirit and determination of the Poles.

Warsaw conveys to visitors many favourable impressions, for it is a great city, in most respects well cared for and certainly flourishing. The long straight streets lined with trees and leading to the large wooded gardens (*Jardin de Saxe*) are amongst its pleasant reminiscences. Immense piles of recently erected buildings provide residences for large numbers of people in flats. The medieval Royal Palace gives the key in its type of architecture to the design of many a Polish edifice, and forms a remarkable centre to the

older part of Warsaw. The new Russian Cathedral was at last nearly finished when I saw it this summer. For years past it had been difficult to trace any progress towards completion, the doorways were always blocked with the same weather-stained beams, the frescoes in the tympanum remained year after year in crude outline, and the whole building, so magnificent in conception and in exterior execution, had a rather forlorn look, perhaps because there is so little relief to the eye in its red and white brick façades. The glimpse of the city from the Vistula railway bridge affords a study in roof harmonies ; on a hot summer afternoon the gilded domes of the Cathedral and the copper roof of the Palace seem to be pendent in mid-air, adding to the overpowering glow from the river and the white terraces above it. The Catholic Church has no rival in Poland ; whatever the Russian system may accomplish otherwise, it can do nothing to alter the numerical preponderance of Catholic over Orthodox. These Polish churches are over-decorated, according to

modern ideas. They are all in the heavy baroque style of the eighteenth - century buildings in Western Europe. This is not Russia but a different atmosphere, more akin to French traditions in some ways than to those of the immediate neighbours. The street signs and announcements in Polish and Russian bear witness to a surviving individuality, and it is disappointing to find that some knowledge of Russian helps but little towards the attempt to read Polish. At first sight it seems as if someone had been trying to translate the Russian character into a more intelligible language, and as if the success of the endeavour had not been conspicuous. Polish words look so odd with their accented consonants. Very likely it is not more difficult to learn Polish than Magyar, but neither the one nor the other fulfil our Western ideas of a model language, and the foreigner is not expected to use the vernacular, either in Budapest or in Warsaw.

The Israelites have a large part of the city almost to themselves, and one meets them all

over the central quarter, while many of the shops and other business enterprises are in their hands. The peculiar long gowns and peaked caps are not becoming even to the young men of the community, while the elder people so frequently wear dilapidated garments that they fall much behind their juniors in appearance.

We crossed Warsaw once in a hotel omnibus in company with the Japanese possessor of tickets for a tour round the world. The hotel courier held out the thick volume, "*Comment font ces Japonais du progres!*" He was not so much impressed when our fellow-traveller began to question him in English as to the electric-power facilities of Warsaw, and other items of knowledge for his diary.

It is undoubtedly the case that Warsaw has grown and flourished under Russian rule. Probably when Napoleon came to the place the population was a mere fraction of its present figure. The form of government has been severe in some matters, but the actual practice is generally quite reasonable. I can

speaking to the courteous treatment received personally from Warsaw officials, much in advance of that obtainable in some parts of Russia proper. The proprietor of a factory just outside Warsaw told me that he found many advantages in working in Poland as compared with either Germany or England. As he said, there were no cast-iron regulations of Prussian origin, nor even County Council inspectors to be placated, also he had much less trouble with strikes than at his works in other countries. With all the Russias for a market there was no serious anxiety about getting plenty to do, and he was able to secure every ingredient for his manufacture within the country, with just one exception, the raw material of which came from Galicia. He had wished at first to build in Warsaw itself, but he was advised by a friend that some morning, when he was particularly busy, he might have a call from the military authorities with a request for the removal of his chimney, as it had been found to interfere with the artillery line of fire. So

he settled himself some miles away, and I scarcely think that either Austrian or German has so far interfered with him. Until the German Army devastated Western Poland one might travel in nearly every direction, and find oneself always within sight of a factory chimney; indeed at Lodz they are almost as plentiful as at Manchester. Lodz and Moscow divide between them the cotton spinning of Russia, and are largely supplied from the Central Asiatic plantations. There seems to be no particular reason why Posen and Galicia should not participate in these manufacturing enterprises which do so much towards supplying the vast population of Russia. At present both of these Polish lands are shut out from this great market by frontier duties, yet are unable to compete with the great German and Austrian factories. Lodz, in German hands, would be at the same disadvantage. If Poland were united under the Tsar, Posen and Galicia would come into their inheritance. In Warsaw there was for years an unfinished avenue, most elaborately



ON THE VISTULA AT WARSAW

levelled and paved on a gentle incline in the direction of the Vistula. It stopped short at a flight of unkempt wooden steps, while out beyond a low-lying suburb were the piers of a vast bridge amid the sweeping currents of the river. The whole plan is on a direct line, and the road eastward on the further side of the river had been laid out. The bridge and its connecting viaducts were wanting, so the whole enterprise was useless and apparently remained so from one year to another. All Poland may perhaps be in need of the direct touch with the eastward stretch of Empire which was suggested by the half-finished bridge. The bridge is completed now ; may it bring good augury of a reunited Poland.

The Picture Gallery in Warsaw is not of very high merit artistically, so far as I can judge, but it conveys some impressions of the reasons for Polish troubles in earlier days. The largest picture, quite recently painted by a Polish artist, is that of a crowned enthusiast, who carries the Cross in one hand and the sword in the other, and is riding over the

bodies of his enemies. He is portrayed with grave set face leading onwards a great army of knights and squires who have caught the fire of enthusiasm from his example. Though he makes no use of his sword, it occurs to the spectator that he might have accomplished better and more enduring work if he had spared his opponents. The slaughter must have raised up much enmity against the Sign of the Cross. To what extent such scenes are reflected in the Semitic troubles of the present it is impossible to say. Throughout the Picture Gallery there is much of the same savage spirit apparent. John Sobieski saving Vienna from the Turk is wholly admirable, but John Sobieski crushing out Jewish revolt or leading his cavalry against a peasant army may be regarded in a different light. Every predecessor of Sobieski, king and magnate alike, is painted as a warrior; there is no peaceful scene in this part of the collection. The pictures of royalty in the eighteenth century find the kings of Poland in lace and ruffles, taking their ease in gilded *salons*, in

effect a mere imitation of Versailles. So the idea of kingly duty towards the people is left undepicted, and the obvious inference is that it never existed in the palaces of Warsaw. The monarchy seems to have fallen unregretted, and one partition after another followed until all the land was under foreign rule. Poland could not therefore profit politically, even when the chance was to all appearance provided by the conquests of Napoleon. His Polish allies continued faithful to his cause from the arrival of the Eagles in 1806 until his disasters of 1812 again engulfed their country. The Emperor never seemed to realise that their due reward was liberty for Poland. In the Kremlin of Moscow among the French cannon gathered up during the retreat are Polish guns of the monarchy, requisitioned along with the recruits from the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to fight on the losing side just as Poles had done so often for more than a century.

At Cracow it was possible to imagine the Polish monarchy in its long-past time of

conquering strength. Cracow is an old-world city, not without signs of prosperity, but not more than one-tenth of the size of Warsaw. The medieval wall and the conical roof, which is a feature of the towers, are carefully preserved, and it may be permitted to hope that they will survive the present war, as the Germans are not the assailants in this locality, at any rate not at present. There is plenty to be seen of great interest at the Cathedral, which is surrounded by the citadel of former ages. From its battlements a wide expanse of hill and valley forms a setting for the long windings of the Vistula, here only a somewhat insignificant river. Hotels leave something to be desired at Cracow, and so do the pavements. However, every street leads to one or two of the specimens of old Polish architecture, here at its best. There is no such curious market-place to be found elsewhere in Poland. The long arcades of the central hall and the many belfries in the square are mementoes of the days when Cracow was a royal city. The valley of the Vistula must always have



NORBERTINE MONASTERY NEAR CRACOW (ON THE VISTULA)

been the seat of power, whether Poland was ruled from Cracow or from Warsaw. Possibly as navigation made progress, though slowly enough in those Middle Ages, the advantages of Warsaw as a market centre on the banks of a great river came to be recognised, and Cracow lost its importance. The whole course of the Vistula was then through Polish lands ; it is not easy to put the clock back so far.

It seems to be assumed that the Russian name for the newly acquired city of Lvoff (Lemberg or Leopold) has only just been bestowed. I find all three names on picture post cards bought in that place three years ago on my first visit. Very probably we will go on calling it Lemberg, when we call it anything at all. It is a long way from Vienna, from Budapest, or from Berlin. I have tried all three routes, and so I realise that the Russian armies had still a great distance to travel to any of these capitals ; but at Cracow they are close to the Silesian coalfields, so important to Germany.

Lemberg has many of the attributes of a capital ; there is the Parliament House, as well as the palace of the Governor, a post heretofore generally occupied by one or other of the Hapsburg archdukes.

In the central streets and squares of the city there is much to recall the relationship with Warsaw. The older buildings have the same sort of quasi-Flemish gables, and the prevailing style of church architecture is even more definitely baroque, if the epithet " definite " can be applied to these eighteenth-century structures. The market-place provides some elements for a picture, as the lines of red scarves and headgear afford the colour requisite among the grey and yellow old-world buildings. Even in early spring the city is bright with flowers ; the magnolia is especially conspicuous. For Lemberg lies far southward of the bleak plains round Warsaw, and under the shelter of the encircling hills the genial spring weather comes to stay. The deeply shaded alleys of the parks and avenues go to show that when summer



Lemberg - Hauptplatz (Lemberg)

arrives the sun is less welcome than it is further north.

The Austrian Government some time since gave Home Rule to its Galician subjects, and this has meant in practice that the Polish majority in the Diet has had things all its own way. The Ruthenian, or Red Russian, finds it difficult to acquire land, and is placed by the existing laws under some other disabilities. One wonders what changes will result from Russian dominion ; the Jews who throng the busy streets and seem to do all the business may not be altogether pleased with the change from King Log to King Stork, but on the other hand the "Red Russian" will have more say in his own affairs.

It is reported that the Russian administration has remodelled the names of about two hundred places in the conquered territory ; let us hope that they have applied this process to that of the last eastward station in Galicia, which has hitherto been Podwoloczyska.

CHAPTER V

KIEFF

HOW is it to be done? What can be said about Kieff that will really make a picture at all worthy of this city that is set on a hill, a true picture of this Canterbury of Russia? Three or four passing visits are quite inadequate for any thorough comprehension of the place and its surroundings. Perhaps a week's sojourn, with several tours of the Lavra and of Saint Sophia, would make it an easier matter to marshal the facts. Such an expenditure of time has always been an impossibility, in fact most of my visits to Kieff have been simply halts between the arrival of the Courier train in the morning and its departure for my ultimate destination in the evening. It was nevertheless advisable to utilise the enforced stop, and this could be managed

very advantageously at Kieff. It is a city of pilgrimage, and for that reason flourishes exceedingly, far in advance of any other South Russian town. Here are well-paved streets, great municipal and Government buildings, terraced gardens, and many woodland walks, with the wide river Dnieper down at the base of the precipitous descent. The busy Krestschatik (Street of the Cross) is always full of people from all parts of Russia. The shining golden domes of many churches are constantly to be seen as one traverses the city, and are a remarkable feature of the hill landscape from each of the approaches by railway across the encircling plain. The isolated range rising steeply from the river level, the broad Dnieper so full of white steamboats plying in every direction, the dominating towers of the Lavra Monastery, each detail goes to make up an impressive picture. Kieff has plenty of the commonplace, uneven streets and pavements are not absent, and the sort of artistic impression which would be so apparent in a French or

German city a thousand years old is all but lacking in Kieff. It is so absolutely and distinctively Russian that it has its own standard of the picturesque. The surroundings of Kieff are an outcome of religious devotion, a devotion that has lasted for many centuries, and that shows no sign of abatement to-day. To the Western mind there are many puzzles in the Eastern Church, and its elaborate ceremonies are often difficult to follow, but the whole of the ritual is evidently devotional to the myriads who know it so completely as do these Russian pilgrims. Still the throng marches to Lavra, making its way towards the Cathedral of the Annunciation, treading in the steps of their forefathers of thirty generations. Their shrines were first set up when the two monks from Constantinople, Anthony and Theodosius, obeyed the call of the Byzantine Imperial Princess who had married the ruler of Kieff. They came and taught Christianity, just as Augustine had done at Canterbury four hundred years before, at the invitation of Queen Bertha. The



CATHEDRAL IN THE LAVRA MONASTERY, KIEFF

stories seem substantially similar, and their results followed the same tenor. After passing through the gateway of the Lavra Monastery the scene is most curious. The black-robed monks go to and fro, mingling with the motley crowd of pilgrims, who do not travel in their best clothes. High overhead towers the front of the cathedral, covered with pictures wherein pale blues and reds are the prevailing tints, with delicate lines of gilding for framework and an elaborate design also in shining gold on the soaring dome. The precincts of the Lavra cover quite as much ground as did the whole of some English medieval city such as Chester or Canterbury, so it is impossible to give anything like a detailed description of the whole. All through the days of Tartar invasion, all through the Polish conquest and the onslaught of the Turk, successive communities of monks have made their homes here. Year by year they have gone out to preach, even century by century, while in every one of those long-past springs the

Dnieper overflowed its banks, spreading over the flat country that seems from the Lavra terraces to be boundless. The river will do the same next March and in all the meltings of the snows that are yet to come.

Times were evil for the monks in some of those past centuries, and they quarried far down into the rock to make refuges for themselves and hiding-places for their treasures. These catacombs form part of the routine of the pilgrims to this day, and may be also visited by the ordinary traveller. They are rather gruesome places, and considerable enthusiasm must be required in order to appreciate suitably the perambulation through narrow passages by the light of the monk's single candle, apparently so unlikely to survive. No doubt the rock is hard, and earthquakes are infrequent at Kieff, but the sensation of going through underground ways scarcely more than six feet in height, perforce in single file, soon becomes irksome, to say the least. The interest too is less acute than it is in the catacombs of Rome, so full of pathetic

history. At Kieff the monks were often voluntary residents in the darkness, but this was never the case in the catacombs of Calixtus or Domitilla by the Appian Way.

On one occasion our guide to the Lavra proved to be a particularly interesting personage. He had served our party at the hotel lunch, and in response to an inquiry as to plans for visiting the monastery, he offered to conduct us if we would wait till four o'clock, when he would be free. With his excellent French it came rather as a surprise to find that he was a Bulgarian. He had made good use of his time during a few months' stay at Marseilles, and he was naturally quite as fluent in Russian also. He was therefore able to translate the monk's details, spoken in Russian, into French for our benefit, and it did not seem to trouble him in the least that neither was his native tongue. He was evidently well versed in such points, for he was ready to give us further technical explanations of the sights over and above those furnished by the official guide.

We have often wondered whether Alexandre the waiter was summoned to serve in King Ferdinand's armies ; perhaps he was among the twenty thousand who lost their lives in the capture of Adrianople, an enterprise that proved to be so entirely fruitless after all.

My latest halt at Kieff was on a Sunday in the early part of this summer, and I found it a very satisfactory occasion for renewal of my memories at the Lavra and other points of interest. All the gates were open, and no conductors were necessary, one could wander at will. Most of the time was taken up with wonderment at the embossed silver doors of the sanctuary in the Ouspensky (Annunciation) Church and the jewelled icons on the walls close by the screen. The family parties of pilgrims were taking their afternoon meal under the trees in the great courtyard, and it seemed as if people were under no official restraint.

The monastery has always been well fortified, for this was absolutely a necessity in the earlier centuries of its existence, when Tartars

and other marauders went through the country at frequent intervals. When Kieff came into the possession of the Russian Government finally, they took advantage of the previous defences to construct a citadel which still exists and contains the head-quarters of the Army Corps stationed at Kieff. That it is now a strong fortress cannot be affirmed. A Russian cavalry officer in whose company I was travelling the other day did not seem to think much of it, and Antwerp had not then been taken ; indeed, it was before there was any idea of war. Kieff must, however, be always an important centre for the Russian army, at least one would imagine that this is likely, while Kieff remains in touch with the south-western frontier. The captors of Antwerp are now claiming that no fortress can withstand their guns, therefore the older fortifications are not much more out of date than are those lately completed, and it seems to follow that the entire system of defensive works will be revised.

The ancient church of Saint Sophia is at

some distance from the Lavra, and is almost equally conspicuous from a distance, standing as it does on the crest of the range of high ground. It is considered that Saint Sophia in Kieff has its prototype in the more famous Saint Sophia in Constantinople, and it is not difficult to trace resemblances, inasmuch as the Byzantine style of architecture is seen probably in its greatest perfection at Constantinople, and it is not a style which lends itself to many varieties of development. At Kieff, however, the eleventh-century builders showed some originality, for they endowed their edifice with fifteen domes as compared with the five which were planned by the Emperor Justinian when he built his great Cathedral of the Holy Wisdom.

The fifteen domes are in groups of five, and naturally afford many very impressive points of view from the open space surrounding the building. The whole is purely Byzantine in every detail, and is full of all kinds of antique charm, dating as it does from the first age of Christianity in Kieff. No such edifice exists

elsewhere in Russia, and it is worth the journey to Kieff in itself. The later churches of the city are many, and some of them are very striking in situation, though far less artistic in their details than the ancient buildings.

Looking out from our hotel window into the Street of the Cross, we saw the pavements rapidly filling up, and the crowd soon interfered with the passage of the electric tram-cars. Presently an avenue was cleared by the police and a funeral procession came : first a large number of school children, boys and girls, carrying flags and badges, then the hearse, very plain, and just behind it the coffin carried by blue-capped students, and then thousands of people marching in fours. It was the funeral of a professor of the University of Kieff. All was most simply arranged, and the scene was most impressive, owing to the vast numbers taking part in the ceremony.

Recollections of Kieff are not always connected with summer weather, for they include

pictures of melting snow forming torrents down every channel, as the morning sunshine gained strength in the spring weather, and of the freezing up of the whole mass in late afternoon. At that time of year the keen Polish north-west wind seems to lie in wait for the unwary at almost every street corner. Nevertheless, and in spite of all such drawbacks, the pilgrim from the West will be glad to revisit Kieff as often as the chance occurs.

CHAPTER VI

HARBOURS OF SOUTH RUSSIA

THE most extensive estuary in South Russia is that formed in the confluence of the Dnieper and the Boug, the ports being those of Kherson and Nicolaieff respectively. It is perhaps as well to record here the fact that the Black Sea is tideless, so the river currents are the only movements to be taken into account so far as water navigation is concerned. Down at Otchakoff, where the open sea is encountered, a southerly gale may be a somewhat disagreeable experience, but inside the land-locked estuary only really severe storms matter. Ice forms freely from December until late in February, and the rivers continue to bring down good-sized blocks somewhat later in the season. Powerful ice-breakers are constantly in use during

the winter, and they generally succeed in keeping the channel up to Nicolaieff available for business, though sometimes it is necessary in very severe weather to declare the navigation closed for a week or two. The estuary preserves the aspect of an inland lake up to Nicolaieff, and becomes even wider above the town. The harbour is formed of one or two bays in the great sweep of the expanse, and large steamers have sufficient depth of water alongside the quays. The residential and business part of the town is at some distance from the quays, and is of great extent. The place is laid out in rectangles with wide avenues between each block, planted with the customary white acacia tree. Throughout the residential quarter the houses are nearly all one-storey buildings, with good gardens and a plentiful supply of fruit trees, which bear great crops, especially peaches. [At Nicolaieff is the great naval building yard, where more than twelve thousand men are busy at the construction of large cruisers more powerful than the *Goeben*, and equal to any operations

against the German-Turkish forces in the Bosphorus. Some of this work is under the charge of British engineering firms, and the keenness of their employees has resulted in the establishment of many football clubs amongst Russians as well as English. It is curious to hear the calls at tennis or football always made in English, and that by people who know next to nothing of our tongue. Certainly English is the *lingua franca* of all sporting enterprise, and some German authorities were doubtless under the belief that Englishmen could do nothing else but play games.

The great river Dnieper flows strongly past the town of Kherson during the spring weather, and it is not difficult to find the reason for so vast an outflow. It is only necessary to see the wide plains round Kieff almost wholly submerged by the melting snows which feed the Dnieper in that region. As the sea-going craft must load in the stream at Kherson, it cannot be considered quite so convenient a port as Nicolaieff so far as the ships are concerned, but the inland transit facilities are

far greater. The water system of the Dnieper spreads for long distances in South and Central Russia. Kherson is usually ice-bound for some time each winter, for the river naturally becomes sluggish when the upper reaches far northward freeze up, and then the cold takes more effect on the river surface than it does on a wide estuary such as that of Nicolaieff. Kherson is the residence of the chief officials of the province, and it is held in esteem as a centre of Russian society, much in advance even of Odessa in that respect. It was at Kherson that I made acquaintance with the Russian system of orchestral accompaniments to the midday meal. In places of this sort a band of performers takes duty daily at a restaurant for about three weeks and then moves on to another town, its work being taken up by other travelling companies in succession. There are usually women performers among the number, and this particular band was conducted by a lady.

From Odessa steamers cross each night to

Kherson and Nicolaieff, and only when there is ice in the channels is the passage made by day. The railway transit is about three times as long, something like twenty-four hours, as may be inferred from a study of the map.

Chorli, a little further east, is a small port in private ownership, and is employed chiefly for the export of produce from the estate.

The next harbours of the mainland are on the shores of the Sea of Azoff. Though rather difficult of access along a branch line of railway, Berdiansk is quite worth a visit, for it is a typical old-fashioned Russian town, cleaner than most and containing many good houses pleasantly situated among gardens and vineyards. The local wine has not a very high reputation, but in the absence of anything better it will pass muster. These Azoff towns must have been very much cut off in winter before the branch railways were made. Those lines to Berdiansk and to Mariupol are still types of the system as it existed in Russia five years ago. Since that date Russia has advanced in many respects and not least in

railway passengers' accommodation, but these branch lines still leave much to be desired. Perhaps we might find branch lines even in this country that would bear reforming. In former days the ice-bound surface of the sea was the readiest means of winter transit along the coast, though not free from adventure now and then. I have been told of a sledge journey from Mariupol to Berdiansk during which the traveller and his driver were brought up quite suddenly at the edge of a strip of water about nine feet wide intersecting the icefield. As the break in the ice was exactly across their path it was necessary to consider their position. The passenger, who knew the Azoff well, directed that they should turn towards the shore, then about a mile distant, but the driver said they would do better by turning seaward, and the other agreed. In fact, as they drove in that direction the "lane" of water gradually narrowed until it became possible to step across. It was still a work of time and patience to persuade the horse to do likewise, but they

eventually succeeded by employing part of the sledge as a bridge. They found out later that the ice was quite detached from the shore at the point opposite to the great crack which they had encountered. They would therefore have been in considerable danger if they had not driven seawards. The story sounds quite like some Polar experience. The Azoff ice is usually firm until February or early March, but after that it becomes only a floating mass which often accumulates round the north side of the Kertch Straits and makes the climate of that locality abominable until it finally melts.

Mariupol is a great contrast to Berdiansk in point of cleanliness. I am sorry to have to draw a comparison so unfavourable to Mariupol when the name is so graceful, but they should live up to their name. I do not think that it is a necessary result of the multitude of iron bars, or of the piles of coal, that the dust and mud, the uneven streets and banks of refuse are so conspicuous. As at most of the towns along the coast, the passenger

railway station is a great distance from the quay where the Azoff boats land people. It looks as if there might have been a good many droschky drivers consulted when the locale of the station was under discussion. Perhaps they have mostly retired with a competence by this time, and possibly the hour is approaching when the train will come alongside the steamer.

Mariupol is sometimes called the Cardiff of Russia, for the reason that in the hinterland of this district is a region of coal and iron and a network of railways amid a dense population. It was a Welshman who began the ironworks and who developed the coal-fields into their present activity. I am sorry to be quite unable to remember whether the adaptation from his own name has taken the form of Evanskaia or of Hugheskaia at the works. I rather imagine that the former would look more like a Russian word and would afford fewer dangers in pronunciation.

The main business of the South Russian harbours is the export of grain. To this end

all the arrangements of the ports are directed with more or less efficiency. The greater part of the cargoes for the steamers comes down the rivers, which are full of traffic throughout the season of open water. The great barges that carry this grain are quite in a class by themselves amongst shipping. Frequently may be seen a craft of this sort large enough to load two thousand tons of grain, and the navigation is conducted by just three or four men. When it comes to unloading, there is a swarm of people provided, though the work is aided by machinery in most cases. Nicolaieff is the busiest place, taking year in and year out. For the access to the port is seldom interrupted by ice for any prolonged period, and the railway brings down considerable quantities of grain during the winter and spring whilst the rivers are frozen. Of absolutely ice-free harbours there are only two in South Russia ; these are Novorossisk and Theodosia. All the others have periods of blockade, longer or shorter. As already indicated, the Sea of Azoff is closed for about

four months, and at that time some of the traffic finds its way to the port of Theodosia, in the Crimea, or to Novorossisk, near to Caucasasia. There is, however, an important change taking place as regards the disposal of South Russian crops with the exception of those in the Don River valleys. To the westward of those valleys large factories have grown up in many of the towns and have added considerably to the needs of a region which was formerly purely agricultural. To take the specific instance of Mariupol, mentioned above, the ironworks have so large a population dependent on them as to absorb most of the produce from the neighbouring country, and the consequence is that Mariupol has almost ceased to export wheat. In greater or less degree the same conditions are in course of development throughout South-West Russia, and the grower will benefit at the expense of the exporter.

South Russian foreign trade has of course been quite suspended since the entry of Turkey into the war. Probably there is but

little intercommunication even between the various ports on the Black Sea, as the fitful appearances of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* interfere with security for merchant vessels, although so far neither of these Turko-German craft has done much damage to Russian men-of-war. Their prowess has been chiefly confined to open ports, quite indefensible, such as Theodosia and Novorossisk, good parallels to Scarborough and Whitby. An occasional attempt, more or less disastrous to the attackers, has been made upon Sebastopol and its vicinity.

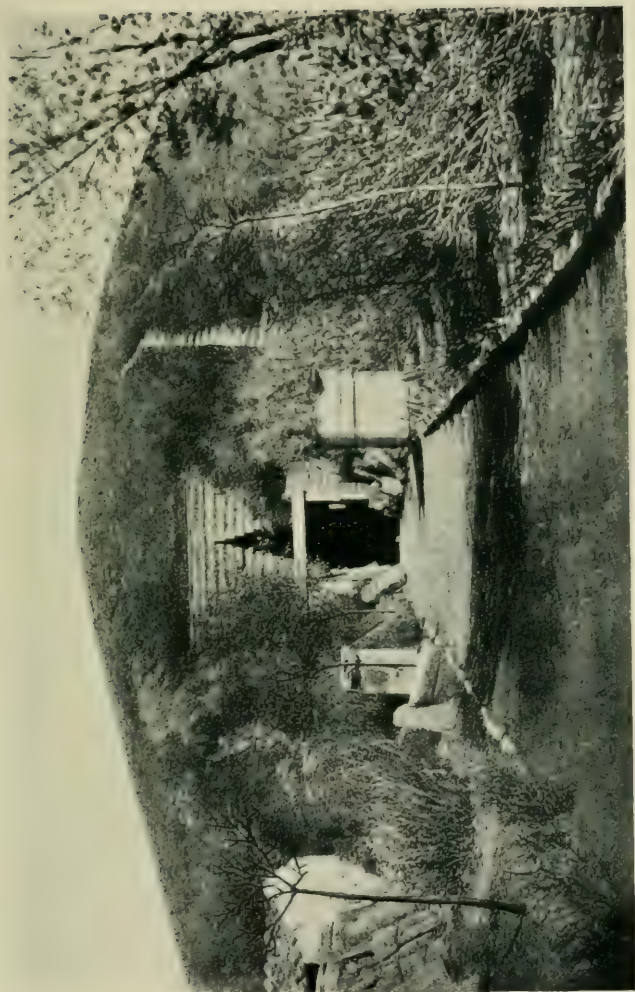
CHAPTER VII

THE GREAT KURGAM

“**H**ELIKA, the wife of a soldier,” so runs the inscription of a memorial tablet at the Zaskie Kurgam, two miles from Kertch. The character is Greek, and there is nothing to indicate even the century in which Helika lived, but the soldier, who recorded the wife’s name without carving his own, appeals to all the ages. He may be credited with a deep appreciation of his Helika, deeper perhaps than if he had provided an elaborate list of her virtues on a stately epitaph. We may be allowed to hope that he was before very long drafted off to other scenes; perhaps he fell in battle against the Barbarian somewhere along this frontier of Empire. At any rate this simple memorial of the dead,

chiselled on a roughly hewn stone, seems more touching than any of the long stories in marble or granite that have been collected at this wonderful spot. Throughout the Eastern Crimea these Kurgams crown every hill, but only very few of them have been opened. When Russia became the ruler of this land the superstition of misfortune attending any disturber of these resting-places was set aside, and the Tsar's officials began an investigation of their contents, but owing to the impossibility of getting workmen skilled in such excavation, the results were little more than heaps of broken pottery and fragments of iron or bronze. The order came that all digging was to be stopped, and this edict remains in force to the present day. This Zaskie, or Great Kurgam, is much the largest of the burying-places, and stands by itself on the plain or steppe. It is a curiously symmetrical hill, and when we saw it in the spring sunshine its bright green surface was decorated with patches of the small Crimean lily, white and glistening. The mound is

pierced by an alley leading straight into its centre, where a chamber has been formed with successive courses of stone culminating in an apex ; the effect is much like the inside of a conical straw beehive, but the beehive is thirty feet high. On the floor of the chamber the place of honour is taken by a sarcophagus covered on all sides with long inscriptions, and the whole of the alley is lined with votive altars and tablets found near at hand and arranged at this spot where many of the relics were originally unearthed. Some of the scripts are in Latin, some in Greek, and there is at least one other language. Some have invocations for the favour of divinities in the mythology of Hellas or of Rome, some are Christian and tell of eternal hope. Some are in remembrance of important personages and have inscriptions of suitable length, others have nought but a single name and a word of farewell. Some begin with the thyrsus of Hermes, others with the sign of the Fish, emblem of the New Religion. Though the Great Kurgam is probably the most



THE GREAT EUCALAM WITH MONUMENT, KETCH

important of all these mounds, there must be much to fascinate the archæologist still hidden beneath the undisturbed surfaces elsewhere, but some day they will be all explored and fact will supersede romance.

As Greek and Tartar, Turk and Caucasian, meet in the market-place of Kertch, there is plenty of opportunity for study of race characteristics. Some of the tallest men and certainly some of the best-looking women come from the other side of the Straits and from the towns below the range of Caucasus. On working days there are but few identifying costumes, and we have not seen Kertch in festal attire. Tartars, of course, always wear their sheepskin caps, and Greek as well as Turk have the red fez. The Russians are few comparatively in this part of the Crimea ; the soldiers and officials are probably all Russian, but not many soldiers are to be seen in the town, for the forts of Yenikale are at some distance. The town may be supposed to make its living in one way or another from the vast fleet of

steamers which, under their many national flags, pass northward into the Azoff and in due course come out again with their grain or timber cargoes. The procession is continuous through all the daylight hours ; some ocean tramp on light draft comes to an anchor, and the Consul has his agent ready to go alongside and see what is wanted. In these out-of-the-way places the ocean tramp's owners have very little regard for the appearance of the ship's hull, and the irregularly sized patches of various tints in paint give the craft a somewhat odd look. There is plenty of time to notice these vagaries, as the steamer from Novorossisk or Odessa does not come anywhere near the Kertch quay, but makes fast to a hulk outside the harbour. A tugboat plies to and fro for the transfer of passengers, so that the landing at Kertch is a rather lengthy business. One experience of ours was that of leaving the quay in the aforesaid tugboat about nine o'clock on a moonlight evening and spending four or five hours on board waiting for the arrival of the

Vesta, which was to take us onward to Novorossisk. The deck of the tug was crowded with passengers, chiefly third-class, the small cabin was quite impracticable, and the only safe seat was on our baggage. The cruise was really interesting in spite of the drawbacks, for the moonlit expanse of the Straits and the many shore lights formed an ever-changing panorama. Only the delay was rather a long one, and there was no sustenance to be had except vodka, which was naturally rejected. The *Vesta* proved to be not much of a resting-place, as no cabins were available except one in semi-darkness for my wife, and there seemed to be a large herd of cattle on deck which had to be passed. With morning this herd was simplified into two calves, and breakfast was welcome as we neared Anapa. I had spent the small hours on a bench, opposite to a dignified Mussulman in a turban and burnous, who kindly offered me an apple drawn from the recesses of his attire, and therefore rather beyond the limits of an acceptance. While awaiting at table the

midday meal, a rat appeared, much to the discomposure of my wife and to the amusement of our fellow-passengers and the steward. They all launched into travellers' tales of the exploits of rats on board this boat. We never ventured to book in a second-class Black Sea boat again.

Our friends had been anxious for us to remain with them until a better steamer was going, and promised us a concert for the evening that we spent afloat. A noted violinist was to come by the *Vesta* to Kertch, and there were other attractions as well. The violinist found that the boat was so late when he arrived at Theodosia *en route* that he chartered a motor and travelled the sixty miles by land. Still he was unable to make his appearance at the concert till nearly midnight. However nobody minded, they just sat and talked and got some supper, so passing away the interval. In South Russia so few people trouble themselves about fixed times for anything. On one of my visits to Kertch I was greeted by these good friends

with the news that they had to attend a funeral on the following day, and would I like to come too? My objection as to being unprovided with suitable garments was immediately overruled, for they told me that no one but the family appeared in black at the ceremony.

It was a long drive up hill and down dale, through farm-steadings and over rocky tracks. We came at last to the village where the whole population, men, women and children, were all on their way to the same destination. The death had occurred far away in Siberia. He had belonged to the family of one of the principal landowners near by, and his brother had taken a whole fortnight to travel to the scene of the fatal accident. The brother had a long distance to traverse by road, and only reached the end of his toilsome journey too late to do much more than to arrange for bringing back the coffin, and now to act as chief mourner.

As we approached the churchyard we came into sight of a wide countryside full of harvest

work right up to the ridge of the low hills. Down to the left hand was the sunlit expanse of sea, fringed with wooded gardens. At some distance along the shore was a jetty for loading grain, stone, or timber from the estate. The church, though not very small, was quite full of people, and we few English were content to stand on the steps outside the transept door, where something of cool air still remained, an oasis in the brilliant sunshine all round. The Bishop of Kertch, and several clergy and cathedral choir, were already singing the opening portion of their funeral service, so unfamiliar to us from the West. Those unaccompanied chorales, antiphons, and hymns were doubtless of the best music, and each was excellently rendered, but it seemed to us as if it would never come to an end. Even some of the family found the strain too prolonged, for they came out of the church for a few minutes of fresh air and then returned to their places.

As mentioned, the villagers had left their houses and their harvest-fields, and after

taking possession of the standing room inside the church, the overplus were walking about the ground waiting until the actual interment took place within the improvised arch erected over the grave and wreathed with flowers. The last triumphant hymn was the signal for the funeral procession to be formed, and presently they came out by the west door, leaving the church floor strewn with evergreens, while a crown of red roses was placed upon the coffin. At the grave the clergy vested in green, the Bishop in purple, took up their positions for the final blessing of the resting-place, and all was over.

The ladies of the family, in deep mourning, waited for the greeting and expressions of sympathy on the part of my English friends, and took particular care to include all of us in their courteous answers. They spoke partly in French and partly in English, and made special acknowledgment of our presence, bidding us welcome to the village on the estate. It now became evident that the array of tables in a corner of the churchyard was to

be the scene of a feast for these peasants who were present in such numbers, and it was not very long before they were ready to sit down. The women, in their customary dress of red or blue with the white head-covering, made a good point of colours in a scene which in other respects was sufficiently picturesque, as we left the churchyard and realised the effects produced by the red roof and white walls of the church, the golden wheat sheaves, and the deepening blue of the sea beyond. An impulse of wonder in connection with the absence of any sign of deep sorrow may seem natural after such an experience of the Russian funeral ceremonies. Like so many of their customs, these ceremonies show a difference from our own modes of thought, a standpoint to which we are unaccustomed. We must remember, however, that the teaching of the Russian Church emphasises one point very clearly, that "death is only the gate of life. Why should we sorrow for those who have gone before? We shall soon meet them."

It would have been quite contrary to Russian laws of hospitality if we English had been allowed to depart from the neighbourhood without visiting some of the houses which lay sheltered in those woodlands along the seashore. We were occupied during the rest of the day in endeavouring to cope with the meals so liberally provided for our benefit, and in strolling through the well-stocked gardens sloping down towards the waterside. Although the village had been reached soon after ten in the morning, it was late evening by the time that we were once more jolting over the rough cobblestones of the suburbs of Kertch.

CHAPTER VIII

SOUTH RUSSIA IN SPRING

SOUTH Russia at the end of March begins to feel the breath of spring and the effects of the brilliant sunshine. To the new-comer it seems curious that the overcoat is still so universally worn, for it is certainly irksome when one is walking for any considerable distance. Yet even the fur collar is still regarded as indispensable. It only requires one or two experiments as to doing without a wrap to discover the absolute necessity of the prevailing custom. The icy wind reigns supreme at every street corner and goes straight to one's bones. In effect, every point where the sun has not penetrated on that day is still in wintry conditions. The cold blasts have travelled over many miles of ice and snow, not quite continuous at this

time of year, but sufficing still to coat over the lakes and slowly moving rivers, whilst deep drifts are lying about on slopes and under railway banks. The world is just waking up and the process takes time. The moral is the expediency of wearing an overcoat in Russia as far on into the season as it seems fashionable, and if the coat is a long one so much the better. It is possible to be nearly boiled inside it, but the alternative of a severe chill is much to be deprecated. Goloshes are so definitely an institution that there are special stands provided for them in the entrance-hall alike in hotels and in dwelling-houses, and the same arrangement is frequent at the entry of a bank or a merchant's office. The plan is not altogether an unreasonable one, seeing that there are such quagmires of mingled ice and slush to be negotiated, and it may be noted that "golosh" is quite a good Russian word. The mud is in every road and even in every main street of the provincial town, and out at the country house there is no possibility of going beyond the limits of

the garden on foot. The night frosts are still so keen that all the quagmire has a hard surface in the morning, but reverts to an entirely liquid state by midday. There are two reasons for doffing outer garments when paying visits, business or otherwise. The first is that the interiors of houses are always thoroughly warmed so long as the outside temperature remains uncertain, and the other that the street is so often the worse for weather. The dvornik, or porter, takes charge of the visitor's hat, coat, umbrella, and the inevitable goloshes, quite ready to bring them forth at departure, of course, in exchange for a coin of ten or fifteen copecks. The dvornik holds a curious position, being the keeper of the door and paid as such by the owners or tenants. At the same time he is a servant of the Government, and has to report the movements of the various denizens of quarters within his portals. One cannot help wondering what is the advantage to the State that the police should be kept informed as to the number of occasions on which Mr.

Robinson comes in or out during the day. It is also the duty of the dvornik to find out the duration of the visit of any stranger, as this fact has to be considered also by the police. The dvornik is seldom an institution of the country districts.

The spring weather out on the fields soon brings to the surface of the ground the green shoots of the autumn-sown wheat and rye, the first bits of any bright colour that relieve the monotony of grey, brown, and white, which have been dominant till now. The ploughing for spring crops begins here and there, as soon as the snow has begun to melt off in earnest. It may well be imagined that the land is in a state of mud which can scarcely be described ; it is not easy to realise that this is the first stage of the immense summer production in South Russia, also that the farmer absolutely rejoices in having his ground in a condition of complete saturation. For the anxiety which is inseparable from agriculture in all countries centres in Russia on the question whether the coming crop will

get enough moisture. It is certain not to get too much during its period of active growth. South Russia is a dry and thirsty land at times, and this saturation from melted snow goes far to neutralise any spring drought that may follow. Nevertheless, the landscape looks most unpromising when nothing is recognisable from the train but stretches of mud with wisps of snow lying where the drifts have been deepest. It is in connection with these drifts that the snow-guard comes in so usefully. The guard is sometimes composed merely of hurdles which are removed and piled up when spring makes them useless. One may see this process in full vigour at the same time as that apparently premature ploughing already described, and the women manage to pile the hurdles skilfully, though the work has to be done amid that unimaginable mud. Country dwellers in Russia must become careless of the weather conditions while the thaw is in progress. Another form of snow-guard is a belt of trees, and yet a third is a long mound. To the

traveller who wants to see something of the country both these institutions are objectionable, for they shut out the view. After coming up the long incline very slowly the locomotive begins to move more satisfactorily, and hopes are entertained about a new landscape, but a zone has been reached where snow-drifts occur. So the belt of trees at once intervenes, probably on both sides of the line quite impartially. A young foreigner who was reporting on his journey through Russia, made a special point of the extensive forests which he had seen from the train in the South. He had not realised that the snow-guards on which he had based his report are merely narrow belts, with length, and too much of it, but without breadth. At Rasdelniya, the "point of separation" (what we should call the Junction, but they put it the other way round), there are great plantations of these trees in process of nursing up for their work. It was very interesting to walk through miles of these avenues, whence trees were duly selected for transport to any

weak places in the snow-guards of the South-Western Railway of Russia. The woods formed a welcome change after a long walk across the steppe, out in the sun. The question was raised as to the reason for setting up this nursery in a place so exposed; why not have chosen one of the valleys close by some stream in this favoured land? The reply was quite conclusive, for the trees were wanted to line the railway in the most exposed places, and so they must be grown under conditions as nearly similar as possible to those of their permanent location. Trees grown down in those valleys by the water-courses might do much better so long as they are not moved away, but would have small chance of a useful existence when they came to be exposed to the full force of the northerly gales of January, when the Arctic Circle seems to include all Russia in its iron band.

In town and in village alike the gardens and their contrivances for summer shade look particularly out of place in early spring, when the double windows of houses and shops are

still in their winter framework. It is rather a curious sight, a little later, to see the process of removal of a large plate-glass window from a shop front. The frame is all grooved and fitted carefully so that the annual operation can be carried out with the minimum risk, but one would imagine that plate-glass insurance people might want extra premium in Russia. They pack the double window-frames in the houses with cotton-wool so that the exclusion of the air may be as complete as possible; the result is that the rooms are apt to be stuffy beyond endurance towards spring, for the atmosphere of the house has scarcely been changed for three or four months.

There often appears to be good reason for the divergence of the Russian calendar in a country where frost and snow may recur with some severity far on into the season, known to the almanack as that of spring. The extra thirteen days do something towards putting things on a sound basis, for it is some consolation to know that when April comes to

the Russian gardens it is really the fourteenth of the month further West, and that there is the probability that those last two weeks of so-called March have taken the sharpness out of the atmosphere.

Close to the ground amongst the short grass are growing many-tinted iris flowers, white and bronze, purple and gold. They are in vast numbers, perhaps thousands of little bunches could be gathered; they are only three or four inches out of the ground, and they endure for no more than a single week, then they vanish, till another April comes round. These are some of the earliest of the quite uncultivated flowers; then comes into splendour in suburban gardens the yellow forsythia, and presently masses of purple wistaria make the contrast on the verandas of the datchas, a word implying anything from country cottages to splendid mansions. Many Russians value their gardens, though they are inclined to let shrubs and plants run wild, and to do very little pruning. Perhaps they may think that the icy winter

does enough in curbing the growth. Some devotees of flowers have their standard rose trees swathed in straw bandages until the cold is done with. At Yalta, in the Crimean Undercliff, the spring itself brings roses in great profusion ; there are parterres a mile in length, where the April blossom fills all the air with delicate perfume. At Livadia, close by, the vineyards of the Imperial Appanage begin to show green shoots at the same season. I may explain that the Tsar's property in the Crimea and the Caucasus has the official designation of " appanage." We have found the earliest spring wild flowers at the foot of the long slopes of Caucasus, where the purple anemone grows near to the small white liliun, and tiny golden-flowered acacia is dangerous to gather by reason of its sharp thorns. Later, but still in the Russian spring-time, the yellow azalea shines out on every sunny bank of the high plateaux which lead upwards to the panorama of Mount Elbruz.

Last of all the spring glories of South Russia in point of time comes the large white

acacia. It bathes the streets of Odessa as with another snowfall, and many another town has laid out the central avenue with these trees in the hope of emulating the original display which is so constant a joy for some weeks. Never do these white acacias put out bud or shoot until the frost is over ; they stand bare and black even when the sun has shone brilliantly for many a day, but at last they burst into life and people are content to believe that summer is not far off.

CHAPTER IX

SOUTH RUSSIA IN SUMMER

A LAND of green and silver, of gold and russet-brown : this is South Russia in summer-time. It is a fertile land where the sun is scorching for us islanders, but most propitious to the cultivator in this Black Soil region. Timely rain works wonders where sunshine is so plentiful ; seasons of drought do not often occur, though often feared. The long slopes constantly seem to promise higher hills beyond, but the upper country is an almost level steppe, which is Russian for table-land. The steppe here is as closely ploughed as are the slopes, there are no barren or desolate expanses in this favoured region. The train climbs almost painfully up its winding track and presently comes out on the level, just where we might expect a

good-sized hill. After a short run on this level another valley is reached, and down again goes the train into the next stretch of luxuriant pasture by the margin of the sluggish stream whose waters find their way eventually to the far-off Black Sea. The cattle are dotted about on this river bank, and above the low-lying lands are the strips and squares of the peasants' crops. Patches of silvery rye and of golden-coloured wheat, of mustard in full flower, and of the later ripening millet, alternate with the dark colours of the fallow. And so for hundreds of miles from daylight to dark, and once more at another sunrise and another sunset, we come to harvest fields continuous over wide provinces, and only interrupted by the infrequent villages, and the still rarer towns. There are scattered lines of willows, there are acacias and sycamore and plane trees at the stations; round the villages are a few orchards, and the landowner's house is sheltered amid groves of pine, beech, and ash trees. The countryside is mostly treeless, given up entirely to

farming, so the chief variety is between the smaller holdings of the peasants and the extensive areas cultivated by the owners themselves. The village is usually irregularly planned, often hanging along some hillside near to the torrent channel, which probably supplied water to the original settlers of medieval times. Now the stream has scooped out for itself a deep ravine, and its feeders have done the same, alternating with crumbling ridges. The village highway seems to have suffered from the same natural causes, and is now composed chiefly of mounds and channels, both being unfavourable to locomotion. The roadways are wide, and where they are on the level are apt to be occupied with strips of rough grass, patches of mud, or sandy heaps, and sometimes all these components are visible. In the most fertile parts of the Black Soil region many of the village dwellings make a good show with their green roof and white walls, but everywhere the thatched tenement is in the majority. Inasmuch as the house, the stable,

and the stack are alike roofed with thatch, it becomes a little difficult to distinguish each from each, more especially when all three occur indiscriminately throughout the village area. Garden strips are filled with flourishing lines of maize, and where the moisture is at all sufficient there are parallel rows of giant sunflowers with their crowns of ebony and gold. No village is built down by the river bank, for the whole valley bottom is feet deep in water when the snows are melting. It is at this time that the village streets are nearly as deep in mud. The edge of the steppe seems still the favourite position for building, although the recent introduction of artesian wells in the Russian agricultural regions has made the peasant more or less independent of a fixed area. This also gains more point from the fact that the village commune is now free to relax the ancient rules as to land cultivation in turn and to appropriate to its own members specific pieces in full ownership. The position of the village has been very little considered by the

railway engineer and consequently the station is frequently at a great distance along a very bad road. Station platforms are nevertheless crowded with the inhabitants of the neighbourhood when the train comes in. Not that these people have any idea of undertaking a journey, they come only to greet their friends who are on the same errand, or in hopes of finding some acquaintance in the train. At some of the towns an upper platform is provided further back from the rails, so that the local leaders of rank and fashion can make their daily promenade without hindering the work of the officials. It is only at the larger stations of the towns that a *salle d'attente* is provided, elsewhere there is no obstacle to free access to the platform. In any case most people are allowed to pass direct to the trains, and the phrase "most people" includes beggars and the children with flowers and fruit, so unsafe to buy. It is a motley array. Sheepskin caps are much worn even in summer, and it is not necessary that the article should be a new one, or even that it should have

been new in any recent year. Leggings and footwear in general, amongst the third-class passengers and their friends, are apt to be ingeniously fashioned from the relics of outworn garments. The man who has spent something appreciable on his clothes is probably in a gaberdine and long boots, just like the pictures of Tolstoi. The gaberdine is usually blue, but may be green or black, or it may have lost all traces of its pristine hue. The procession of village dames has come hurrying to the station with the sort of sustenance that appeals to the third-class traveller. They soon become the central point of a crowd of buyers. Perhaps one woman will be found who has had sufficient enterprise to provide fresh bread with milk and eggs. She earns a quick appreciation, and is able to fold up the cloth into an empty basket before the train is ready to start. The passenger who bought six river crabs will doubtless meet with his deserts after supper, and will wonder what is the matter with him. The family parties in process of

changing their place of abode are always present at the station and will sit contentedly on the platform, with their backs against the booking-office wall basking in the sunshine. Their impedimenta consist chiefly of pots and pans, with an occasional bundle carried ordinarily on sticks. The children are wrapped in veritable heaps of materials, and have the customary kerchiefs tied round the head, often duplicated, July heat notwithstanding. On a journey it is so much easier to get the clothes put on than to pack them. Russian women of this class have no preference for fresh air round about their heads, and do not relax the unwritten rules as to wearing these white kerchiefs even in the summer. The headgear is usually clean at the beginning of the journey. When they are at work in the fields, amongst the beetroot or at harvesting, they are not so particular as to the colour and seem to take anything that comes to hand. Close to the village is the church with its tall belfry tower and its green dome, perhaps two of them. Its whitewash has not

been lately renewed, and the gateways and walls of the enclosure have rather a forlorn look, for nothing is considered to need repair in this country until it falls to pieces. So the stone steps and gate-posts of any entrance are left to weather influences, and show no signs of the sort of attention bestowed on such matters in most parts of Western Europe.

Russians lead two separate lives. One is spent behind double windows and in the house or cottage well warmed by the ever-present stove; this is winter, and in the view of many Russians a time to be merely endured. The other is the real life for all classes, who take to their summer pleasures with all the more zest because the months of endurance have been so prolonged. The garden alley with its pleasant shade, the summer-house with its outlook across parterre or miniature lake, the profusion of flowers and of fruit everywhere, all help to make the Russian summer the time when people begin to live and cease merely to exist. The public

gardens of the cities have changed so since they were dull patches of untidy shrubs, and scarcely worth a visit three months ago. Now they are filled with brilliant beds of petunia, of all kinds of antirrhinum and cannas, with tall zinnias such as one seldom sees in England. The band plays every evening, and the warm air all round about makes the experience a very enjoyable one, more especially when recollections come up concerning that different aspect of things only on the previous visit. A call to see a friend at his country house leads to a thorough inspection of his rose garden, wonderfully stocked with endless varieties. By the way, he sent to meet us at the station his pair of horses and his driver vested, as usual in such circumstances, in a blue velvet gown with red silk sleeves. He has sold his property in that part of Russia, and so I shall not see that rose garden or those crimson sleeves on my next visit to South Russia.

As the summer goes on the ground becomes dry and parched, the gardens cannot be kept

up to the mark and are left to run wild or to wither off. The sun, always sufficiently powerful for the greater part of the year, now becomes scorching, and the roads are deep in dust. In some recent seasons there have been heavy summer rains and a green summer has resulted. Certainly this phase of the weather is much pleasanter than the heat, but it is not so good for the crops, which suffer very seriously if the weather becomes adverse at harvest-time.

One may see the whole family busy at their crop in good weather: the father with his sickle, the mother gathering up the bundles to make the sheaves, while some of the children fashion the wisps of straw into ties for the bundles and keep the mother supplied with them; possibly there will be a tiny child or two under the shadow of some sheaves already set up. They will work in this way as long as there is any light, and will employ the few hours of darkness in getting their sleep on the field. They do not obtain very good results unless the season is a propitious

one. The peasant cultivator is very conservative and undertakes his work according to prescribed dates, without much regard to the special character of the season. If, then, a spell of drought comes just after his sowing, the plant does not thrive, for he does not like the labour involved in deep ploughing. Soon after he has made his final ingathering keen night frosts begin. The remaining glories of the summer very quickly disappear, and there is nothing to look forward to but the coming of winter, the double window-frames, and the snow.

CHAPTER X

THE RUSSIAN CITY, AND CONCERNING MOSCOW

IT can scarcely be affirmed that artistic ideas are widespread in Russia outside of Petrograd and Moscow, each of which have fine picture galleries. In the less important cities, even in Odessa and Khar-koff, it is the custom for the shopkeeper to indicate his wares not by name, but by paintings of the articles. The baker has a very wooden-looking pile of breakfast rolls or a large loaf of rye bread depicted on his side posts; the shoemaker has a series of boots of all colours, and generally with impossibly small feet; the grocer draws a picture of a coffee-pot and samovar with a flitch of bacon beside them. The idea seems to have originated in the fact that a great many people could not read. Probably they manage to

read more nowadays, but traditional customs are strong in Russia. These are such crude daubs too, scarcely up to the level of the soap advertisement. If we look in vain for artistic display in the shop-fronts of Russian streets, we also fail to find much originality in their modern street architecture, and in fact every town is uncommonly like another. The streets are usually long and straight and fringed with acacia trees, but you may go to Russia very often and yet see no acacia blossom. Behind the screen of trees there is a miscellaneous lot of buildings. Of these the Bourse is generally the largest, then come the banks, solid and serious looking, all of them, but without much to distinguish them from the plans adopted for the façade of our English workhouse. If there is decoration it is too florid, too much developed as to roof, or there is an eccentric tower or dome brought in. In this want of proportion the architect has followed the example of the modern churches. The builders of these seem to have been quite disinclined to adopt normal lines,

and they allowed themselves all kinds of flamboyant developments. The gigantic towers carry vast masses of decoration, and the immense west fronts stand at the end of some avenue, imposing in point of size but like nothing else in church architecture. The Moscow churches are among the most surprising specimens, though it must be remembered that they are older and represent an age when there was less opportunity for a builder to compare notes with his compeers abroad. So the Moscow architects were perforce original.

In employing the phrase "perforce," I have a mental picture of the architect's fear of consequences in the days of Ivan the Terrible. If the ideas of the Tsar were not carried out, it may be imagined that there would be a vacancy to fill up. After some such fashion alone can be explained the eccentric edifice in the Red Square. This church of St. Basil includes the styles of Eastern mosques with something of Renaissance decoration; even the many domes are



ST. BASIL'S CATHEDRAL, MOSCOW (BUILT BY IVAN THE TERRIBLE)

of various shapes and sizes, and there is no provision made for heating the church. In Ivan's own time attendance was compulsory and people just had to freeze, but now services are held only in summer. When we saw it in April the frescoes of the interior were still covered with an ice coating. They do say that the unfortunate architect was blinded by his savage master so that he should not repeat his work. Another story of Ivan is, that after he had killed his son he was excommunicated by the bishops and forbidden to enter any church. Whereupon he built an annexe to one of the Kremlin cathedrals and attended therein to say his prayers. Certainly the annexe is there to this day, with an entrance from the palace. The principal entry to the Kremlin enclosure from the old walled city of Central Moscow is through the Spasskia Gate (Gate of the Saviour), and the sacred figure was placed above the doorway of the tower by the Tsar Alexis in the seventeenth century. He issued an edict that every man should take off his hat when passing

this gate, and the order is still observed by almost all.

We found the fair on Palm Sunday most curious and characteristic. It was held chiefly in the Red Square under the wall of the Kremlin. This great space was entirely filled with booths more or less substantially built, and it was possible to buy vast quantities of artificial flowers, butterflies, and paper decorations in gold and silver. None of them seemed particularly attractive to the stranger, but the Muscovites all carried two or three of these tokens by the time that the fair had been open for an hour or two. We saw a general, already decorated in the service of his country, who had added a number of fairings round his cap. It is true that he was attended by a grandchild or two, and the whole party were carrying large bunches of many-coloured paper flowers. Then the rubber balloon was everywhere, and the carriages that made the circuit of the fair usually had two or three of these aids to enjoyment. All kinds of vehicles entered the



THE IBERIAN GATE, MOSCOW

line and went driving round the Red Square, through the Spasskia Gate and the Kremlin, coming into the fair again by the Iberian Gate for over an hour at a time. Here might be seen the ordinary droschky and unkempt driver, following closely behind the smart landau with its high-stepping pair, and then the troika drawn by its steady-going trotter harnessed between the two showy gallopers, one of the best sights in Moscow. The gendarmes kept the road clear most deftly, although the crowd of pedestrians was enormous, and everybody seemed to find a good reason for visiting the booth just across the way. We may have been rather fortunate, but the fact remains that we saw only one drunken man in all that concourse.

When Napoleon was engaged in considering the extent of the destruction to be inflicted on Moscow, he is said to have reprieved one of the churches because he admired its architecture so much. To the British visitor of the present day the exempted building would not occupy any high place on the list,

but we have no reasons for regarding Napoleon as an authority on such matters. It is not recorded that he succeeded in destroying much besides the Arsenal, where his guns were afterwards stacked. He had to hurry away at the last, when the city was fired by the Russians themselves. Church architecture is, however, only one of the many aspects that are to be linked with this ancient capital of Tsardom, as Western Europe reckons it. It is not really so very ancient, nor was the title of Tsar applicable to its ruler when Moscow began. The city and its lords climbed into eminence together. The Romanoff belonged to Moscow, and Moscow chose him as its sovereign, and so the Romanoffs reigned there for three generations until Peter Romanoff, whom we call Peter the Great, built his new capital amid the frosts of the North by the shining waters of the Neva. Moscow yet retains many of the attributes of a capital, and it has undergone one well-known episode that distinguishes it from all others, an episode stirring and

pathetic in the highest degree—its abandonment by its population. As one passes the Theatre Place or the Red Square by the side of the Kremlin wall, it seems impossible to believe that a century ago this great centre of life was abandoned by the majority of its inhabitants, who went far off and watched for what was to happen. Would the sacrifice of their homes avail to save their country? That was the question which they had to face, as they obeyed their Tsar's commands and moved out by the rough roads in telega, in droschky, and in troika. In the last days of summer they were abandoning their houses, their churches and their icons to the mercy of the invader, to the great conqueror of empires, whose armies were commanded by new-made kings and princes, and comprised all nationalities of Western Europe save the British. Was it possible for Russians to defeat Napoleon, till now invincible? Could they accomplish so great a task even in their own country? If it was impossible, where was the advantage to be gained from their

leaving Moscow? What was to be the result of giving up their dwellings to destruction, perhaps by the hands of their own countrymen, under the orders of the Tsar in the struggle against the foreigner? Why not stay to defend the capital against him? Surely the heart of Russia was worth an effort, even when those disastrous battles had laid open the way to Moscow. Scarce anyone even among the leaders realised that Napoleon would be nonplussed by his unopposed entry into Moscow, that in fact he would not know what to do next. The French Emperor and the inhabitants of Moscow had all alike believed that the capture of Moscow would be the final stage of the war, and that there remained now to Russia nought but submission. Had not the surrender of Vienna, the entry into Berlin, brought two great nations to the point at which they acknowledged themselves conquered? Napoleon made certain of obtaining the same result with the occupation of Moscow, which would provide one more jewel for his crown. He

had only to bestow the title of Prince de la Moskova on his most brilliant general, and then to await the surrender of the Tsar Alexander. But an almost empty Moscow, a Moscow so strangely quiet except for those recurrent fires, a vast city in which the great French army was swallowed up and made scarcely a sign of its presence, all this was bewildering because so unexpected. These people of Moscow, where had they gone? Along the weary road from Vilna past Smolensk the villages had been so few and so far apart; were things better in other parts of Russia? Since he had left behind him the country of his devoted Poles, what wide plains of forest and sand, what morasses of mud and of marsh had he crossed! And these city dwellers had gone away from their own houses and their own street corners out to the dreary steppes, they had scattered their families hither and thither amongst peasants and serfs—for what? To avoid on their own part and on that of their country any sign of submission to this invader. As French

Emperor he might issue edicts, he might appoint officials, he might organise a court and date his proclamations from the Kremlin in the belief that he was master of Russia. From the Terem or turreted palace of the Tsars he could survey practically the whole extent of this vast and mysterious city, for the Terem stood alone in those days. The attendant at this quaint residence of Peter the Great tells visitors with a smile that Napoleon slept for a few nights in the low-roofed chamber of the Tsars, but only for a very few nights, so his story runs. For he soon had to recognise that he had come to an impasse ; also that summer was over, and that each week of autumn would add a new cohort to the Russian national defence. So came the inevitable moment when the retreat must begin, that retreating path which he seldom ceased to tread henceforward until the day when he signed his abdication at Fontainebleau, and Europe was free from his iron hand. The Fabian tactics of the Tsar and his generals had succeeded in turning the



THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

tide of battle against the invader of their Holy Russia, and they followed him across Europe.

Among national deliverances this is surely a remarkable one. It is small wonder that Russians value highly the rows of guns piled in the Arsenal yard at the Kremlin. There are nearly nine hundred of these cannon: some are marked with the Imperial N, some have the *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* of the Republic; there are some with the Bourbon *Fleur de Lis*, there are guns of Lombardy, guns of Naples, even guns of Poland. There they lie in long array, each inscription telling its own story to the visitor, its lesson of the closing chapters after twenty years of war. Is the story to be repeated in our time?

It is not wonderful that Moscow should have its triumphal arch in honour of the safe return of the Tsar Alexander, after Napoleon's abdication. It stands close by the station of the Warsaw railway. Now only a day's journey is required for the transit from Poland, but we may think of the weary months spent on the

road by the Grande Armée of a century ago. The great church that dominates its own quarter in the city is a really adequate memorial, a worthy expression of thanksgiving for the outcome of those stormy years. The long columns of names cut in the marble tablets are the record of those who fought and died for their Russia in all those campaigns. Picture and scroll, porphyry and gilding made this a glorious sanctuary, this the sanctuary of the Holy Saviour, the memento of a national deliverance, a deliverance in which so many were called upon to take their part, for which such multitudes were willing to suffer. When all was accomplished, then in the years following they willingly poured in their offerings of thankfulness, until the great shrine was capped with its five golden domes beneath the azure skies of Moscow. All is so easy to relate, all was so hard to accomplish.

Russia was saved, in part by its vastness, but much more by the indomitable spirit of its people, by the energy and wisdom of its

leaders, by the perseverance and endurance of the Tsar himself.

Russians and Britons alike took up their burden in those years of eighteen hundred and wartime, those years of stress and suffering.

Much has happened in the long century that lies between those days and our own. The aims and interests of the two countries have been divergent for considerable periods of time. Once we have been at war, and more than once there have arisen serious differences of view. Events of the last few years have altered the outlook, and we find the two nations in close alliance as of yore. The danger to each of us comes from a new quarter, but it is the same set of circumstances that occurred in the days of Napoleon. So the attempt to establish world-wide dominion has to be met just as it was before. Writing at the end of December, when the war is apparently approaching one of the crises that we must expect to be recurrent, the parallel of the attempted invasion of Russia suggests that history may repeat itself. Even the vast

German armies are not free from the risks which overwhelmed Napoleon's much smaller force. As Russians say, General December took the field then, and has acted against the invaders once more, and if he is not sufficient to break up the battle array, there are still Field-Marschals January and February in reserve.

CHAPTER XI

NOVOROSSISK

THE long rays of sunshine lay across a sparkling sea and lit up the high bank, together with some of the buildings that go to make up the watering-place of Anapa. We were at anchor in the roadstead close to the land, and the usual barges were taking ashore sundry agricultural machines and all sorts of other packages, including a few small kegs of caviare from the Dnieper. The unfamiliar costumes of porters and of boatmen showed us that we had arrived in yet another region of Russian dominion. Three or four lateen sails at the pier, a church spire and a dome with a few official-looking residences were all that was to be seen of this place with the Greek-sounding name as the steamer moved away in the

morning sunshine. The wooded hills northward abutting on the shore were the beginnings of the Caucasus, and our voyage was to the destination of Novorossisk, the "New Russian Town." We had had as a fellow-passenger the Military Governor of Caucasia, but he had stayed behind at Yalta, where he had been received by a crowd of officers, also in resplendent uniforms. Some of his suite were still with us, in soldierly grey, and we were given to understand that they were bound for Tiflis. After an hour or two the eastward outlook became grander, with crags and snowy peaks glittering in the sunlight, and the nearer coast was chiefly precipitous, without road or dwelling. The snows were quite as good to look at as if they had been perpetual, which they were not. Once within the bay of Novorossisk we lost the sight of distant snows completely, but were compensated by the panorama of that extraordinary folded range where combe and ridge alternate until a dozen of these scooped-out hills and valleys can be counted in an uninterrupted

sequence. The flanks covered with forest or cleared for vineyards formed a telling contrast with the bare, rounded summits of the ridge above. Away to the left the town came gradually into view, with a line of cement works all labelled "Portland," with oil tanks, grain silos and an outpouring of scattered one-storey habitations. From shipboard these seemed to be without order or plan, excepting that involved in each man's choice of his own location. There was not much of the artistic in this view of Novorossisk, but the blue sea and the grey mountain slopes gave it dignity. It is a business place full of activity ; there is no room here for those people who want to loaf, all are busy and seem to want to get on with the work. Steamers were coming up to unload their cargoes at the long piers, and others preparing to get to sea. There is no need for transhipment into barges at Novorossisk.

In the older part of the town, away from the shipping, there was more leisure in the air, and it seemed as if we were in contact

with something of the Oriental, though it was difficult for us to distinguish Georgian from Circassian, Mingrelian from Armenian. We did not see them in their real Sunday clothes, but the everyday garments are quite picturesque. The red, blue, and yellow linen caps, the belts with their silver buckles, real or imitation, the green or white gaberdine, and the red, brown, or black Astrachan head-gear, all lent variety to the wearers' appearance, whatever their normal occupation might be. The traditional good looks which we associate with the Circassian race were the predominant type. Many of the dwellings on the way from the harbour seemed to us to be the merest shanties, but as we climbed the steep streets up to the parade ground we found a very different class of residence. When we came into sight once more of those mountains to the eastward, we understood the chief reason for the location of these great houses so far from the quays. All the miles of the bay were spread out at our feet, all the stretch of folded hills was in front, leading the eye

upwards to those snow-covered ranges beyond which we might picture Elbruz or Kasbek as they are depicted on post cards. In the brilliant sunshine, water, sky, and mountain were steeped in azure, such azure tints as are seldom to be seen even in the tropics. It seemed as if the air itself were blue between us and those barren hill-tops, else why should their greys and browns have become so transmuted? No wonder that near this parade ground should be congregated the best houses of Novorossisk.

We had a welcome awaiting us at the house on one of the vineyards across the bay, so we resolved to deserve it, and took a droschky controlled by a ragged but courteous driver, who did his best to earn his fare by seeking out the wild flowers desired by my wife. The road winds round the promontories and, when the cement works are left behind, skirts pleasant woodlands till the vineyards are approached, all the while with changing panoramas of the outer roadstead and of the Black Sea spreading beyond. Bird life in

those crows by the roadside was vigorous, and the crested hoopoe which we saw was a pleasant reminiscence of the "Birds" of Aristophanes as performed at Cambridge.

The hillsides away from the road are seamed with artificial watercourses for irrigation of the vines. The friend to whom we were journeying had been a steamer acquaintance, very kind and courteous on our first voyage along the shores of the Black Sea, and as we drew near Novorossisk quite absorbed with his return home after two months' absence. He had pointed out with pride his domain so beautifully situated, and then had no eyes for anyone but Madame, who was waiting for the steamer at the quay.

We found a birthday celebration in progress at the end of our drive, and enjoyed the violin playing and the coffee, also the talk with Monsieur in French, with Madame in English. She had visited London and wanted me to define for her the real divergence between High and Low Church—not quite a simple question to settle at an

afternoon reception. Before we went out to see the vineyard the guests were served on the terrace with apricots soaked in white wine, everything from the estate. With sixteen thousand vines it is a difficult matter to ensure sufficient moisture in any dry summer. For the soil is light and porous and the slopes are naturally in full blaze of the sun, otherwise they could not be successful in this region. Probably this vineyard is a small one compared with those of Western Europe, but the conditions are so different in this far-away land. The forests up these ravines have sometimes given shelter to marauders, and it is only a few years since a gang of bandits attacked one of the banks, shot the cashier, and cleared off with a very considerable sum of money. They were chased by the police and soldiers, but the woods afforded them secure cover and no capture was made. A shoe was found in a condition that showed a severe wound to its wearer, but no other trace of the bandits was discovered. It would probably be quite easy to pass any stolen

notes, as I do not imagine that any record of the lower-valued issues is kept by the banks. How can it be done, with three-rouble notes in such enormous circulation? The banks at Novorossisk are now fortified strongholds, the citadel being at the cash desk. I have been describing the impressions produced on our first visit to Novorossisk; such impressions of a place stand out so clearly on first acquaintance, and are afterwards liable to become blurred when the experiences are repeated so often as has been the case with myself. I do not fancy that the ordinary type of European shop finds much scope at such a place as Novorossisk. Most of the business seems to be done in the bazaar or market, where all manner of goods are on sale at the same stall. The large bags of seed which form a prominent feature in these bazaars are sunflower, grown in vast quantity all through the Kuban, near Novorossisk. Every Russian of the lower class is happy when he has his pockets full of sunflower seed; he will go on for hours together cracking the outside husk with his

teeth and extracting the small kernel. It always seems to be so much trouble for the attainment of a very insignificant result. The vendor of a handful of seed is equally prepared to trade in Persian silk scarves, or in those long towels with worked ends which are in this country treated as sofa backs.

Novorossisk has no recognisable signs of antiquity, though it is said that one or more of these bays were occupied by colonies from Miletus or from Athens. When the Russians acquired this coast in 1829 there was not much of a town in this neighbourhood, so these "New Russians" were free to call the lands after their own names. It has no river, and is dependent on the railway for all the interior trade, a very flourishing one. The railway has a double line, and is very largely employed for traffic in both directions. The port is open all the year round, and in fact gets a large accession of work when Rostoff-on-Don and other Azoff harbours are closed by ice. The residential part of the town is

planted with the usual avenues of white acacia trees, and is of course laid out in rectangles. It is rare to find a new town in Russia that is not built on what they call the American plan; they seem to take it as a matter of course, along with their decimal coinage so universally convenient.

Two or three years ago it was not unusual to meet in the Black Sea boats some Englishmen on the way to investigate the oil wells at Maikop, and at that time it was judged necessary to come by way of Novorossisk. One party, more or less personally conducted, were at the hotel on one of my visits and were in great doubt as to their further progress. They went off one morning by the train to Ekaterinodar, hoping to travel thence by motor along the northern side of the mountains, but they found the roads impracticable, and turned up again at Novorossisk next morning. Presently I saw them off in two motors for a journey along the road by the shore, not always a good surface by any means, but still a thoroughfare. On arrival

at Touapse they expected that horseback would prove to be the best, and at Maikop itself residence in wooden huts was anticipated. Since then the railway has been opened from Armavir to Maikop and is to be carried through the hills southward to Touapse. Shortly, therefore, the Maikop people, who now have excellent quarters, will have the choice of two lines of access. I have no means of knowing whether the particular well which was the bourne of these English inquirers has ever done any good. The places further east beneath the higher ranges of the Caucasus are in several instances very attractive points for tourists or residents. The climate of Sotchi or of Gagry leaves little to be desired excepting in the extreme heats of summer. Though the highest peaks are not in sight from these spots, they can be seen from the steamer which makes the tour of so many landing-places. They do say that one situation is very like any other, that there is always a wooded ravine or two between great grassy or rocky slopes, and that even the picturesque

Caucasian attire becomes monotonous. Some people are very difficult to please, while others can find objects of enduring interest in such out-of-the-way places as Novorossisk and its surroundings, and the recent bombardments there and at Touapse have added something more.

CHAPTER XII

INTO CAUCASIA

THE streams have cut out channels, some twenty, some forty feet deep through the alluvial plain. The crossing of these ravines looks like a work of some difficulty, but is accomplished by winding tracks gradually leading down to the ford, where the river is usually shallow enough to prevent the water from entering the conveyance. These rivers come down from the Caucasus and evidently rise rapidly, sometimes they are boiling torrents. At the edge of the precipitous banks are occasional water-wheels for irrigation, a system of buckets constructed to bring up the water from below and to pour it into troughs communicating with many channels, to each of which the supply can be diverted at will. This summer

has brought the normal quantity of rainfall in this Kuban region, and the necessity for artificial supply is not evident, but patches of tomatoes, melons, and cucumbers are laid out in such fashion that they are not dependent on rain. Further afield are the usual crops of this territory, vast areas of tall sunflowers, a sheet of gold and green, the waving tassels of huge maize plants, interspersed with patches of tobacco, and the wheat already partly cut. All makes up a landscape full of colour since along the river banks are many oaks and willows with wider stretches of woodland beyond, and in the far distance the blue hills. Range upon range they are piled up where the distant thunderstorm hangs over the summits in the south-east.

A devious course brought us to a hundred beehives with no house nor any bee-keeper near, but the maize patch in full flower was occupying the whole attention of the bees. The destination of the drive is reached through those woodlands just mentioned, where a tree or two still stands in the



MOUNT KASBEK, CAUCASUS

middle of the road, and it is advisable to take a side track apparently made practicable only this morning. As we approach the village the woods are more imposing, and forest trees overarch the straight fences, which are laid out as if we were in some backwoods settlement in the West. The houses are mostly of one storey, with bright gardens and the great trees round about. The central point of the village is marked by four large elm trees at the crossing of the wide roads, and here we come upon a circle of benches under the summer shade. It may well be that the village Douma meets here to regulate local affairs, just as such bodies did in our own country in Saxon days. We are welcomed with profuse handshaking in the veranda of one of these bungalows by the owner, a Tcherkess, a man much of the Greek type of face. The forefathers of this tribe succeeded in resisting Russian domination for several generations, and in the end the greater number of the tribe abandoned their homeland in Caucasasia, migrating beyond the Black Sea into

the Turkish country. Their orchards and gardens have relapsed into forest, their houses have disappeared, and the traveller who has sufficient escort to pass safely through the wilder valleys may find the ancient well overshadowed by cherry or plum tree, by the side of which once dwelt some Tcherkess family.

Our host is much too busy with his own affairs to be likely to think about the grievances of his race. The enormous expenditure of time required for discussion of business details or any sort of plan is wonderful to foreigners when they are travelling in Russia. It seems as if every point had to be enunciated three or four times, and yet once more recapitulated even after the formula of shaking hands and leave-taking has been duly completed. Our genial Tcherkess was at last left bowing his adieux at the gate, but that did not prevent him from putting in an appearance next morning at our quarters at Abenskaia and going over the whole arrangement once more. That forest village was Greek,

and for that reason kept in better order than are some others. Abenskaia was quite a contrast, the appropriations for roads were each thirty yards in width at right angles to the railway leading up the slope to the main village, with its church domes crowning the hill two miles away from the station. We were quartered in a house within hail of the platform, and never attained to a visit to the central settlement at all.

Every meal is taken in the veranda of these rural houses. The veranda is fitted with glass at the sides, and can be heated with the stove in winter. The sequence of meals has its peculiarities. Tchai, with quantities of bread, is ready as soon as the samovar boils. Jam, and the honey collected on our visit to the hives, are also on the table, but neither of these are intended to be eaten with the bread, each is passed round as a sweetener for the tea. An interval of varying duration occurs, and then the summons comes for the consumption of borsch, the thick soup so popular in Russia. A further

interval ends in the appearance of chicken ready cut up and often accompanied by an excellent cauliflower. The samovar has been removed and beer or country wine is drunk with the meal, but presently we revert to tchai and talk. This sort of meal is repeated towards evening ; with sundry glasses of tchai at odd hours the provision for the day is completed.

Great herds of cattle roam over the unenclosed portions of the lands in the neighbourhood or find their way into the fords at points where the streams are accessible to them. At dusk the beasts are driven homewards in large crowds, and soon stir up the surface of the tracks into clouds of dust. Many of these villages are of quite recent foundation, and their orchards are scarcely yet matured. After the Caucasus becomes distant the country gradually merges into the flat plain of the Kuban, here a vast river fringed with wide marshes caused by the overflow of the spring floods. A flat land, however fertile, has few features that will interest

the traveller after the first hour or so. The towns are so much of one type, and that type is common to all these regions. Armavir has some peculiarities, for it is a village still, though there are eighty thousand people in it. Perhaps the whole number of peculiarities is identical with that of the inhabitants, who decline to make their dwelling-place into a town. They are determined to avoid as long as possible the expense of road-making, which is obligatory on urban communities. So the broad spaces allotted for streets are to this day in the condition known in the Western States of America as "natural roads." In driving from the station to the fine new hotel, one or other wheel of the droschky is at an apparently dangerous angle even in the drier parts of the transit, and the muddy sections afford unknown depths. Armavir has grown up on agriculture and is a very important centre, as one may judge when threshing and winnowing are in progress in front of the traders' places of business in a main thoroughfare. There is room in these wide roadways

for sundry temporary erections which may be required from time to time. In a community of this sort there is not much interference by any local police, and the dweller in rural Russia can do pretty much what is right in his own eyes. Life in Russia is so much less hampered by regulations than it is in Germany.

The new hotel has been rendered necessary by the influx of English people on the way to Maikop oil wells already mentioned. The train makes one journey daily, so the later passenger from the main line has generally to spend the night at Armavir. Still travelling eastward from Armavir, the map seems to promise views of Caucasian peaks, but nothing of the sort occurs for many hours. This part of the highlands is chiefly composed of a series of plateaux rising one above another, and fringed by lines of cliff or by steep slopes. So that from a distance there is nothing at all obvious as a mountain range. At one point on the railway line there is a view up a river valley where for a short time Mount

Elbruz is visible, ten thousand feet of its sides entirely swathed in perpetual snows. It is so far away that it has an ethereal look, as if it scarcely belonged to earth. This mountain is a good many feet higher than Mont Blanc, and the intervening plateau cuts off the vista of its lower slopes, so that nothing can be seen below the snow-line. Along this railway there is in summer an excellent service of fast trains coming through from all parts of Russia. The baths of the Northern Caucasus are the fashionable resorts for society in July and August. Here are to be found high officials, very many military men, and indeed their whole families. Five or six places divide the honours of attracting visitors, although invalids have to quarter themselves at the special spring which is prescribed by their doctor, and there is a good deal of difference in the properties of the various waters. Still, when the regular bathers are all reckoned up, there are vast numbers who go every season to the Mineral Vody because they meet their friends and generally enjoy themselves.

It is rather interesting to the casual visitor from the fact that uniforms are worn on all occasions, and the promenade or the railway platform is in this way highly decorative. The largest places are at the Essentuki springs and at Piatigorsk; this latter is a town of fifty thousand people even at its slack time. I should not like to make an estimate of the number accommodated at the height of the season. The name Piatigorsk means "Five Mountains," and they are quite obvious, standing up sharply from the wide plain, itself some sixteen hundred feet above sea level. The train goes on to Kislovodsk, where the surrounding plateaux give rather better evidence of a mountain region, inasmuch as the purple cliffs of higher uplands are not a great distance. The small town lies along the sides of a ravine, and is laid out with gravelled walks in every direction. I was much interested to find in Baedeker (German edition) minute directions as to the invalid promenades of three or four hundred metres, but not a word about the climb to the highest point of

these walks, whence the twin peaks of Elbruz were so wonderful a sight that it was difficult to take one's eyes off them. There are several Essentuki waters sold, and it is as well to make sure that the correct number is on the bottle when ordering at the hotel. At Kislovodsk there is only one spring, but that one is the most popular water in all Russia. Narzan is the universal drink, with or without wine. The Narzan spring comes up in a pool of effervescing water about five yards across, and is protected by a glass case. From the pool it runs off into the bottling works, which are busy day and night, so that there should be no avoidable waste. For there is some apprehension about the continuance of the spring in its full force, as disintegration of the rock beneath is a natural consequence of the powerful action of the water, which is not unlike Apollinaris in taste and in appearance. It is curious to realise that these waters are feeders of the rivers that run down into the Caspian Sea.

The Vladikavkaz Railway has much less

passenger traffic as it proceeds eastward from the Mineral Vody. The stations afford an increasing variety of costume, and it is rather interesting to see the gendarmes keeping guard in full Georgian or Caucasian uniform ; fellow passengers did not seem to know which of the two the uniform really was, but the degree of its picturesqueness was not thereby impaired. On nearing the bridge over the Terek river the railway makes a long sweep out from the hills, and here for the first time a real mountain panorama comes into view. The line of snow peaks is a magnificent one, and fully equals most of the Alpine scenes of the same sort, with the additional advantage in favour of the Caucasus that there are very few lower hills to intercept the vista of the great mountain summits. Kasbek, with its symmetrical cone of snow, forms the main point of attraction, and this peak continues in sight until the branch line has brought us close up to the entrance of the Terek gorge and the important town of Vladikavkaz, which means Ruler of the Caucasus. Here



ON THE GEORGIAN MILITARY ROAD. DESCENT ON SOUTH SIDE OF THE CAUCASUS AT MILE IV

my journey ended, for I had not leisure to pursue it either to the shores of the Caspian at Baku or by the more desirable route of the Georgian Military Road through the mountains and to Tiflis in Georgia. This alternative was somewhat tempting, for they advertise at the hotel in Vladikavkaz: "Automobile to Tiflis in ten hours; the railway takes forty-two hours"—and well it may, for it goes all round by Baku.

However, I had some evidence that the transit in automobile was not always made in ten hours nor even in twenty. Still the pictures of Alpine scenes on the road made one a little envious of those who had three or four days to spare. The origin and purpose of the road is sufficiently explained by its name. The Georgian Military Road is the only practicable one into Georgia through the Caucasus. Probably it has been largely employed for transport this autumn, when Russia had to prepare for the Turkish armies. The road is not available for heavy traffic in winter. In these parts I met an Englishman

who had joined in an expedition for the summit of Ararat. The mountain is on the frontiers of Russia, Persia, and Turkey, and it is only the Russians who make any attempt to enforce order thereabouts. They have a Cossack detachment stationed at about eight thousand feet, or half-way up towards the summit. To climb in safety from the Kurds it is necessary to take an escort of these Cossacks, who proved themselves equal to all the fatigues of the ascent even when the hired porters gave up. The attempt was brought to an untimely end by an ice slope near the top, and the meteorological instruments remained unvisited, as they had done for seven years previously.

CHAPTER XIII

SOMETHING ABOUT THE PEOPLE

IT is perhaps needful to mention a few of the occurrences in recent years if we are to understand any matters which concern the Russians as they are to-day. Although things had been on the way to some improvement before the Japanese War, yet it is mainly since that time that real progress has been made. There are so many and such divergent views of events that it is not easy to do more than to express certain opinions stated by those who know Russia better than I do. One of these opinions is that the Japanese War resulted in almost unmixed benefit for Russia. For it did wonders in breaking down political influence in the management of the Army, simultaneously with the loss of Russia's paramount

position on the Pacific Coast, a position claimed long ago in the title given to the then new city of Vladivostock or Ruler of the East. The name remains, but the idea embodied is no longer valuable on a shore over against Japan. After the weakening of prestige and of the power to maintain strict centralisation throughout the Empire, disturbances broke out at many points, especially in the cities of South Russia, and in some of these there was practically a reign of terror. Factories were closed at the bidding of the disorderly, or kept open only under military guard; vast strike organisations joined forces with revolutionists and threatened a much wider destruction than they were able to carry out. It is quite doubtful whether even the leaders knew what they wished to accomplish in those "Years of the Troubles"; certainly the rank and file of their followers did not. There was a general impression that things were very wrong, and that some immediate measures were necessary to put them right. Great excesses against the Jews were committed,

and are believed to have had the countenance of highly placed officials. Some of the important towns—Novorossisk, for example—took measures to quell anarchy apart from Government authority, which was weak in some regions. This state of things was succeeded by a restoration of the administrative power everywhere, and by the Imperial decree establishing the Douma or Parliament. It is not possible to go through the confused history of the more recent years. Sometimes the authorities have recurred to measures of repression, such as the trial of the “ Vigilance Commission ” of Novorossisk on the charge of having set up a Republic. In the great majority of difficult cases common sense prevailed, which is more than could be looked for from the Russian police of former days.

The ancient forms of local government were set in action once more, after a long period of time, during which these Zemstvoes had been in effect suppressed by illegal central action. The Premier Stolyopin was not exactly a model of gentleness in his methods, but he

certainly aimed at improving matters, and his murder was generally attributed to his policy of establishing local government in the western provinces, where it was an innovation. That he had to act in spite of the Douma may be regretted. These Zemstvoes perform many of the duties which fall to the County Councils in this country, and of course their main solicitude is in connection with agricultural interests, for they have an elaborate system ensuring the needful advances to growers on the security of their crops. All this is accomplished with the sanction and collaboration of the Imperial Government. The Doumas, of short duration mostly, have not carried through any sweeping reforms, and perhaps their debates absorb too much of the time available for work, but they have initiated a great number of measures which, in some degree, alleviate the lives of those whom they represent. One very far-reaching improvement is that whereby the village community is now at liberty to remodel its own estates. Communal rights, in one form

or another, exist in most parts of Russia, as regards the lands in contiguity with the villages. The wide regions where cultivation is easy and fairly profitable have hitherto been dealt with by temporary allotments of every plot to each of the able-bodied inhabitants. This involved the residence of all within a limited radius, and in many cases going out for miles to work at land which will be another man's in two or three years' time. Under the new law the village commune may allot its lands in perpetuity to those qualified to hold it, and the new owner is at liberty to take up his abode on the property. So that now may be seen in many directions these new cottages standing singly on the fresh site, replacing a dwelling quite insanitary. Furthermore, the peasant and his family are freed from those weary miles of daily walk, a waste alike of precious hours and of much-needed energy. It is not all work and no play even with the Russian moujik ; indeed, one would scarcely recognise the toiler and the toiler's wife when they turn out in festal attire, and

holidays are tolerably frequent. On these feast days the verandas of the village dwellings are filled with men, women, and children in their best attire, picturesque in reds and blues, and in some regions the Sunday gaberdine is of scarlet cloth. The chief amusement is to listen to the gramophone, almost as great an object of interest here as to a sailor on a long voyage. Crowds, too, collect at the railway stations to see the trains pass, all looking as merry and contented as need be. I had an interesting journey in June last with a Professor of Kieff in company, and he took some trouble to point out the peculiarities in those provinces which are named collectively Little Russia. He also told me that, on concluding his examination work at Kharkoff, he had been summoned by the Minister of Education, who was a member of the Tsar's suite on the way to Kischeneff. The Minister had kept him so long that he nearly missed the train to Kieff. This Imperial visit to the South had rendered it impossible for me to get at Kharkoff my police permit to leave

Russia, because the higher officials of the police were kept in attendance all day and every day at the railway station, and there was no one to attend to passports.

On a journey homewards from Ekaterinoslav about two years ago, I was joined by a resident in that province and we travelled together for a day. At Brest Litovski he found an acquaintance who came on with us. This was an official of the Land Revenue Department travelling, as customary, in uniform. They soon got into animated talk, and the official was told that before his arrival we had been discussing English matters, and especially the work of the Navy. Although Russians of the higher classes know England well, most others do not, and these have much curiosity about all British topics, often expressing the wish to visit our country. Indeed, it is quite difficult to get much out of them in return, as they want to take up all the available time with the acquisition of ideas as to England and the Colonies. These two went again over all the details that I could impart about the

Navy, and presently the official asked my opinion as to the existing relations between Russia and Germany. Naturally I disclaimed any ideas on that subject, as I should not have had a word to say on it to any Russian, least of all to a Russian official—in his own country too. So we went on talking of neutral matters, and I was confirmed in my resolve never to discuss the politics of the country. The last I saw of this official was in the hands of the German Customs at Thorn, where he seemed to have a poor time in connection with his very miscellaneous baggage destined for Carlsbad. Possibly his Russian uniform was not favourable to his aims in German territory.

Many Russians seem interested in our coinage, finding the likeness between their Tsar and King George. Then they always want to see a King Edward coin, and of course those of Queen Victoria are very exciting, the more so if they happen to be early Victorian. Questions as to our passport regulations are frequent, and it is difficult to make a Russian

believe that the document so important in Russia is discarded when British shores are reached. The Russian's passport is a sort of testimonial whenever he moves about the country, and he always carries it on a journey.

It seems as if any kind of distinguishing garb or uniform is highly esteemed by the Russian. It may perhaps be said that the Russians are in two classes: the people who wear uniform, and the people who do not. The variety of uniform is quite puzzling, for it seems to be almost infinite. The schoolboy wears a dark blue uniform, and plays football in it. He changes the facings when he goes on to the college, but he still plays football in uniform. Presently he has examinations to pass which may reduce his term of Army Service, and until he has succeeded in passing he still wears uniform, even though he has attained maturer years and is probably married. Then comes his soldiering, and he appears in grey with blue or red facings. Now he sports an undress uniform for his games, and even the officer uses this at tennis.

Presently he may get office under Government, perhaps in the Customs where he adopts green facings, or the Land Revenue where he has an axe and spade embroidered on his collar. Of course the Army officers' uniforms become more gorgeous with every accession of rank.

It requires a very intimate knowledge of the question to know what rank is indicated by the silver or the gold epaulettes. Stars and ribbons become more frequent, as in our own services, with advancement in position, though some no doubt were earned by actual experience in the battlefield. It is obligatory on the Russian Army officer to wear his uniform in public, even when he has passed to the retired list. In such places as Sebastopol there are certainly more men in uniforms than in plain clothes, for there is the naval squadron to be reckoned with. The blue-jacket wears brown ribbons at the back of his cap, and might pass as a British tar otherwise.

The men who wear no uniform in Russia

are not as a rule highly thought of by the other section. This is perhaps not very wonderful, for the majority of those who dress as they please have not the money to buy new garments. The man who lives from hand to mouth on sunflower seeds is not likely to invest much in clean clothes. These people go to make up the nation ; these people are the Russians, the nation whose territory is so vast that recovery from a disaster of ten years ago is automatic. Excepting always the uniformed official who in some cases stands on his dignity, the Russian is an easy-going sort of person, ready to laugh at difficulties and to make a joke of troublesome regulations. Of course he conforms to rules, but with a good-humoured jest about the necessity of such things. He is too much accustomed to these forms and ceremonies to make any real trouble about compliance, and obeys with a happy-go-lucky air which is quite understood by the gendarme. He has much awe of the Colonel and the high official, for he and all of them have had their term of

service in the Army, and this veneration becomes traditional with them. What a multitude of people live on charity in Russia ! The supplication of the beggar is scarcely ever refused by Russians, although we foreigners do not contribute much to their support. I cannot help thinking that the Russian's charity is part of his religion, but it certainly encourages an increase in the number of beggars. One cannot enter a church porch without experiencing some importunity ; but they are not in the least unruly, these poor people.

Russian meals have often been described, but the reality is none the less interesting. One is asked to form part of a gathering for a country lunch, or breakfast, more properly. On arrival after a long drive the guests are set down to an apparently sumptuous repast, including wine, beer, or vodka at the outset. When everyone has finished, the hostess asks if the party would like to spend the hour before breakfast in the garden or on a stroll. Then one discovers that the feast just ended is only

preliminary, and that the real lunch is yet to come. In the instance which occurs to me, the conversation was just as it might happen, in Russian, French, or English, and when we had actually finished and shaken hands with the hostess, as is customary, we went into the next garden, belonging to a brother-in-law, to admire his cannas and begonias. The owner presented himself just as he had been at the turning-lathe, his particular hobby. Yet in spite of his skill in carpentering, one or two chairs in his wife's fine *salon* were without a leg or a back. I may mention that the usual form among Russians is to thank the hostess at the end of the repast and to kiss her hand. It is allowed to degenerate foreigners to substitute the handshake, if preferred. Here is an evening reception in a Russian professional gentleman's house. There was much talk on books, again in French, English, and Russian; there was plenty of good music. Then the "tasse de thé" which Madame offered in asking us to come into the next room, proved to be a very

sumptuous supper, including many sorts of fish, of fruit, besides cakes and jam, none of which could be refused by polite guests.

One more example of household occurrences was in an English family where we were asked to dinner. We were met on arrival with congratulations from the hostess on the certainty of our getting dinner, for there had been a very desperate quarrel in the morning between the manservant and the cook. These ordinarily close friends had been throwing knives and pans at each other. However, peace was restored, and the dinner was excellently cooked and served. The town Russians of that class are very easily roused to active hostilities, but the fit of temper soon passes over.

The Russian wedding is a very important ceremony, which may be performed either in the church or in the house. In each case the bride and bridegroom are endued with crowns, and exchange rings during the religious celebration, which is preceded by a civil marriage. The custom—in some parts of Russia at least—

is for the bride to start on the wedding journey in white, and it is quite usual to see the whole wedding party at the station. The bride wears her orange-blossom, and carries an enormous bouquet ; the bridesmaids appear in the most taking hats that they can command. The first to enter the train is the bridegroom, who has a blue frock-coat with brass buttons and a conspicuous knot of white ribbon. When he has inspected the location in the train he rejoins the party, and the chief bridesmaid, conducted by the best man, goes in to verify matters. Then the bride is handed in by the best man, and the whole party troop after them. The conversation is continued till the last moment, but neither confetti nor rice was employed on any occasion that I have seen. I believe that the evening is the favourite time for weddings, as it is in many other countries.

There is always a vast amount of leave-taking on beginning the most trivial journey in Russia, while kissing and handshaking are accompanied by ceremonious bows and the

removal of hats for a prolonged period. To be sure everyone takes off his hat on entering a bank or an office, even if he has only to make an inquiry at the counter, and it is quite customary in many towns to do the same on going into a shop. It is at that time obligatory to do so if there are ladies in the shop.

The chapter began with some account of the attitude of the working classes after the Japanese War, and of the difficulties caused by revolutionary movements resulting in widespread strikes. It is true that strikes have continued to prevail from time to time, and that in the spring of 1914 they seemed likely to interfere very much with the ordinary course of trade. I do not profess to know much of the rights and wrongs which had given rise to this state of things. It was rather disturbing to be told that the railway men were going out on the following Monday, when I had planned an important journey for that date. I never was stopped in Russia by any such occurrence, it was always in the future. The strikes were, however, very real, and in

Petrograd gradually became almost general. This was about the date of the Austrian Note to Servia, and the Tsar took the opportunity of addressing a large body of men in Petrograd and telling them that they might be wanted to defend their own country. The effect was quite immediate, and the strikes were there and then abandoned. Every man wanted to put his country first and foremost, whatever might be his private grievances. It was said when the war broke out that Russians were fighting only because they were compelled by law to do so. People who took that view knew little of the Russians, of the devotion to their country and of the antagonism to the Germans that have resulted in enthusiasm for Army Service. The change in the apparent sentiment within the last ten years has been immense. From what I have been able to learn, the patriotism was just as keen though so ill directed through those Years of the Troubles.

CHAPTER XIV

POLTAVA

THE confused quarrels which led to the outbreak of the Great Northern War seem nowadays scarcely worth study in view of the so much vaster issues now brought into battle array. Charles XII of Sweden has a record that reads like the times of Richard Cœur de Lion in his chivalric temper and failure to do much for the country under his dominion. He took up arms in the first instance in order to break down a combination which threatened Sweden, but it seems as if his object had been attained when each of the confederates in turn offered peace. He refused any settlement with King Augustus of Poland, chiefly because this German was proved incapable of observing his treaty obligations, and Charles never rested until

he had deprived Augustus of his kingdom and relegated him to his Saxon Electorate. So far Charles XII has our approbation, for Britain has to deal to-day with parallel events, and the inability to recognise other people's rights is still manifest in the German. But King Charles brought into the field against him persons of more ability and of larger resources than he had at command, and the perseverance of the Tsar Peter the Great proved too much for Sweden. From quite small beginnings Peter worked up a formidable army in the course of years. He had no such vast territories at his disposal as Russia includes to-day; in fact the then kingdom of Sweden was probably more extensive than Muscovy, as it was called in those days. Charles was constantly victorious in battle, and as constantly unable to make his victories profitable to Sweden or to himself. Year by year he took his unconquered army further afield, and seems often to have made incomprehensible plans. He was encamped near the Niemen at the outset of one of his

last campaigns, and then decided to attack the Tsar from several points at once, much as Germany and Austria are doing to-day. He himself, as usual, undertook the brunt of the enterprise. He had made an alliance of some description with Mazeppa, the Hetman of the Ukraine Cossacks, and considered it advisable to try and join forces with this ruler, who was really a tributary to the Tsar Peter. When the Tsar found the trend of matters he took care that Mazeppa had very few forces left by the time that the Swedes were expecting to meet him. King Charles came to Poltava in the pleasant May weather ; his army had suffered terribly through the severest winter on record, and the spirits of the Swedes were maintained only by the constant encouragement of the good humour and sang-froid of the King. They had repulsed all Peter's attacks, and had never yet suffered a defeat. How they managed to keep up enough war munitions for such a march seems incomprehensible in these days. The King was wounded on a reconnaissance and so unable to lead his

army into the battle of Poltava, where Peter was waiting for him. The Swedes charged and broke up the enemy's line, but they did not carry on the pursuit, and Peter's general was able to reform his troops and to advance once more. His superior numbers and some newly arrived French guns destroyed the Swedish resistance, and the Tsar gained a complete victory. The King escaped under the escort of Mazeppa and reached the then frontier of Turkey at Bender in Bessarabia. Byron makes Mazeppa tell the story of his involuntary ride in his early days, while he is conducting Charles XII to a place of safety.

Poltava to-day is a thriving town very pleasantly situated among the wooded slopes which fringe the small river. Climbing the hill from the railway station, we pass a blue-domed monastery, and two or three green-pinnacled churches in a shaded street, and we come to the town park with a central column commemorating the Tsar Peter. Beyond are long rows of bungalows, or datchas, with their gardens, and a few factories. Then,

after a level crossing of the railway carefully protected by long booms and watchmen, the country road, fifty yards wide, with mud to match, has to be negotiated. At equal distances along each side of the road are pedestals with emblems of victory, until about three miles from the park a larger monument is reached. This has a tablet in memory of the Swedish soldiers who fell in the battle. Another half-mile to the right, and past the cornfields which are of great extent, there comes in sight a monastery and behind it a huge new church decorated with mosaics in the vaulted recesses outside, and equally gorgeous as to the interior. Close by, but overshadowed by the height and size of the church, is the granite cross placed on the spot where the victory was won.

Within the same enclosure they show a museum of battle relics, chiefly notable for a few contemporary portraits of the makers of history in those times. Churches, monuments, and column are national memorials of the beginning of the Russian Empire as we know

it. Peter the Great was not in all respects a model ruler, but he did a great work for his country as well as for his own successors, and the battle of Poltava relieved him of an opposing force which had prevented any progress towards his aims. The fact that it by no means ended his anxieties on the Western frontier does not preclude the Russians from making the battle of Poltava into a notable epoch of their history. It is in some sense a place of pilgrimage, and the building of that great church was undertaken and carried to a conclusion as a bicentenary memorial of the crowning mercy in 1709. Where the money came from is a point that no Russian would worry about; it may have been from the national revenues, but quite probably a large share was contributed privately. There can be little doubt of the benefit to Poltava and its neighbourhood, for such points of interest are few in Russia generally; there is so little to attract the traveller, and here is something ready-made. Peter the Great was wise enough to recognise his shortcomings as

a War Lord, and always gave the command in the field to a trusted general, while the Tsar served in an inferior post in his Army. Dr. Johnson wrote of Charles XII that he "left a name at which the world grew pale to point a moral or adorn a tale." We have some later instances to which Dr. Johnson's lines might be considered equally applicable, and perhaps the list may yet be supplemented by the names of one or two War Lords who do not acknowledge their shortcomings so readily as did Peter the Great.

Not many days before my first visit to Poltava I had been on a journey in the West of France and had come to the wonderful ancient walled town of Poitiers. Being there and wishing to see something of the surrounding country, I decided on going out to the battlefield which in English history bears this name. To begin with, I found that there are two sites of battles near at hand, and that the local idea of the Poitiers fight is that between the Saracens and the opponents of their invading army. To reach the scene of

the victory of the Black Prince I had to direct the chauffeur to the field of Maupertuis, a word which quite describes the bad fortune that befell the French King John and his nobles on that occasion. Past vineyards and chalky slopes and along the excellent roads of France, the ten kilometres were covered all too soon.

Just before crossing the railway bridge of the branch to Limousin, the field gate leads into a small enclosure which includes the ground where the Black Prince had encamped. There must have been more hedges in the country round about than now exist, for generally speaking the land is open and chiefly arable ; there is not the least mark or memorial of the event. The record of the locality is merely traditionary, but it is most likely that it has been correctly handed down through the five centuries and more. On full consideration there seems to be no reason to expect any sort of memorial on the battlefield. The English did not hold this district very long, and one does not read of their

setting up tokens more permanent than their banners. Naturally the French were not inclined to remember "Maupertuis," and so there is nothing. What a contrast in surroundings as compared with Poltava, and what an immense difference in the results achieved !

It is hard to say that the Poitiers fight had any consequences that were felt beyond that generation. The Battle of Poltava has still some claim to be numbered among the decisive events in European history, and it certainly has that position in the story of the making of Russia.

CHAPTER XV

ROSTOFF-ON-DON AND A RED CROSS HOSPITAL

THE north-east corner of the Sea of Azoff is of great importance for all kinds of commerce, for it affords convenient water communication far into the interior of South Russia. Although the Sea of Azoff is a shallow one as seas go, yet there is no obstacle to access by ocean-going craft over the greater part of its surface. It is only when it becomes a question of getting into the harbours that some difficulties are experienced. In times before large steamers did the carrying for the world, it was easy to berth the schooner to load its grain cargo at the quays of Taganrog or in the River Don at Rostoff. Now things have altered, and the ocean tramp comes to an anchor in the Roads, out of sight from Taganrog and still more at

a distance from the Don. All the inward and outward cargo is dealt with by barge. This species of craft is so constructed that the navigation of the river for long distances can be accomplished, and the cargoes are often the produce of districts far away in Central Russia. The watershed of the Don is second only to that of the Volga in extent, and inasmuch as the Don has direct communication with the southern sea, it has really considerable advantages over the Volga outlet on the inaccessible Caspian. In a season of favourable crops the trade of the two ports of Taganrog and Rostoff is immense, and it is wonderful to find that it can be carried on with comparative ease and accuracy so far away from the oversight of those primarily interested. It is a matter of almost a day's journey from Rostoff to the Roads and back, and sometimes, owing to darkness or fog, the attempt to reach some particular vessel has to be abandoned by the inspector, whose transit in a small tug is in any case rather a serious undertaking.

Taganrog is very pleasantly situated and well laid out in the fashion of a century ago. Gardens and great trees round them give the place an old settled aspect which is not by any means universal in South Russia. It is true that the town is built upon the steppe, and so is exposed to the cold northerly blasts when those occur. There is no room for planting a town of convenient size down by the shore. That part is taken up with the quays and stores necessary for business purposes, and with fishermen who bring in a wonderful assortment of all kinds of strange creatures.

Rostoff is an entirely different sort of place, far away from the coast, and possessing no such pleasant outlook over blue waters as Taganrog enjoys. It is hard to say why Rostoff grew up on this particular spot, and in recent years too. There seems so little to recommend the site, on the bleak steppe and without shelter from the storms of snow or of dust which are appropriate to the particular season. The view from the end of the street is across the flats of the Don valley, a dreary

waste through the daytime, though lit up with all manner of purples and yellows at sunset. Great piles of building along the chief streets are flanked by tenements of all shapes and sizes in the other thoroughfares. There are plenty of matters of interest in the shops, for Persian carpets seem to be among the most ordinary articles of sale, and are set off by the suitably costumed attendants. Caucasian silver is the favourite material for the knick-knacks displayed in the window, and is supplemented by steel work from the same region. How much of it all is genuine would be a difficult matter to decide, though the necessary scrutiny of many artistic objects might be an interesting occupation. Some of the largest factories in the town are those for dealing with the tobacco so widely grown down in the Kuban. Rostoff is certainly a very busy place, and the mixture of nationalities in the streets is remarkable. One of the causes of this variety is the presence of the Armenians in very large numbers, indeed

they are said to do most of the retail trade in this neighbourhood. They live in a separate town, Nakhitchewan, two miles away, where an agricultural colony from Armenia was planted by the Empress Catherine in the eighteenth century. The former colony has developed into a considerable town of nearly fifty thousand people. Agriculture is by no means despised, but the place has grown with the growth of Rostoff, and the Armenian is not the sort to neglect opportunities for business, so he has spread himself over the whole neighbourhood. An Armenian monastery some miles away has now an extensive piece of woodland attached to it, all planted by the community. The shade of the trees has afforded the opportunity for establishing an open-air restaurant, and Rostoff people have not many country drives. So the Armenian Gardens are a favourite resort, and the monks no doubt make something out of the arrangement, though it is hardly, in our ideas, compatible with their profession. The

Armenian Church is entirely separate from the Russian as regards internal government. I have visited Rostoff several times and have received much consideration from friends there of more than one nationality. I was especially fortunate in this respect when I met with an accident in the railway station there. It might so easily have happened at some wayside station, where the doctor would probably have been inadequate, the professional nurse non-existent, and the flies quite certainly awful. It was just at arrival after twenty-four hours' journey and some weariness perhaps made one incautious. The white-aproned porter was disappearing with the baggage, and it seemed as if there was no time to be lost. Never was there a greater fallacy, as a whole week was lost. On the other hand, a curious experience was gained in mixed circumstances. Oil fuel is in general use on the railways of that part of Russia, and all the permanent way is liable to become saturated with it. Porters and passengers all

go across the line of rails, and the result of a slip was disastrous. The station ambulance rendered effective first-aid, and I was speedily *en route* for the Railway Company's Hospital. About the methods of this hospital there was nothing in the least slack, for the doctors and the Red Cross Sisters will stand comparison with their fellows in Western Europe. The doctor who looked after me was an Armenian, and spoke only a very few words of French. At that time I knew very little Russian, so that there was some difficulty in establishing our methods of communication. The hospital was practically an accident ward, for nearly all the patients were people in the company's service who had been injured on the line. Most things were completely up to date, and temperature charts were in full operation. A policy of washing down and scrubbing was pursued with unsparing zeal, and the staff in white overalls looked pictures of neatness. Convalescents wandered in and out of their quarters and played draughts or dominoes in

the corridor. The casual temperament of Russia was noticeable in many trivial ways. One morning, after the customary walk on the balcony, my nickel travelling watch had disappeared from my bedside table. The fact was quickly explained from across the room. "The Sister has your watch," and so it was. Our Armenian doctor had wanted to time an operation, and the Sister took the first watch that she could find. Presently she brought it back with a smiling apology and the usual morning greeting, "A fortunate day to you." My friends in Rostoff were so good as to come and pay me daily visits, which were a great solace. They brought plenty of English magazines and newspapers, with one or two illustrated books which I employed as means for holding some sort of conversation with the other patients. They would come and inspect any picture, and express their high approval of anything sensational, such as a pirate fight on the Spanish Main, or a charge by Ghurkas in India. The *Daily Mail* pictures of the investiture of the Prince at

Carnarvon Castle went the round of several wards. It was not easy to put "Prince of Wales" into colloquial Russian, and the simplest way seemed a parallel with the Tsarevitch. Then there was the man who came up to examine the English magazine and commented on the good quality of the paper and binding. He was ready to study the illustrations *seriatim*, and was equally interested in some Assyrian discoveries and in a sketch of the Bedehouses at St. Cross. After a partial explanation on these heads, one's Russian was hardly equal to the supply of information about the title-page and the tailpiece. But when the interviewer wished to express his thanks in careful writing, it was only courteous to place the margin of the newspaper at his disposal for that kindly purpose. It is quite impossible to give any adequate impression of the exceeding queer-ness of the whole surroundings inside this hospital. The only thing normal was the efficient treatment on the part of the whole staff. The building stands on a hillside in

the suburbs of Rostoff and, like all similar establishments in Russia, is arranged primarily for service in war time. It is permanently staffed by the organisation of the Red Cross, which is a very important institution in that country. I have no doubt that at the present moment the hospital is under Army control, and is occupied by sick and wounded. On every railway ticket that is bought in Russia there is a charge of five kopecks in addition to the published fare. These five farthings are for the benefit of the Red Cross, and naturally amount to a large sum in the course of the year. At almost all the important railway stations there is in the *salle d'attente* a special stall in the hands of the Red Cross people, quite apart from the ordinary kiosk for newspapers, comic cards, or such-like. At the Red Cross counter there are usually good selections of artistic cards, in colours and well designed. The best "Easter Greetings" and many sketches of child life are to be found among the publications of the Red Cross, and all bear the device of the

organisation. Street collections are also made on certain of the Russian anniversaries, and bunches of flowers or ribbon sold for this object. It becomes absolutely necessary to buttonhole the purchase in order to mitigate the onslaught of the cohorts of vendors.

CHAPTER XVI

THE COUNTRY OF THE KALMUCKS

WITH some feeling of relief I realised that the bone-shaking night train was two hours behind time in arriving at Tsaritsyn. I could therefore reckon that the Volga steamer bound for Astrachan would be ready, and that I could take the droschky direct to the river instead of spending an uncomfortable hour or two at the station or in the unattractive town of Tsaritsyn. I had had some experience of Tsaritsyn both in mud and in dust, and cannot decide which is the worse condition at that place. Most of the people are Kalmucks, who are unmistakable by reason of their flat faces and heavy beards. The town is chiefly made up of small wooden houses scarcely better than shanties. Gardens are few, for drought

often occurs in summer. The situation of the place under the steppe and at sea level encourages the growth of hot-weather fruits such as melons, but allows no advantage to horticulturists. That the January frosts are rigorous may be guessed from the destruction of asphalt pavements, from the bent weatherboards on the north sides of the dwellings, and from the arrangement of the telegraph poles whereby they are spliced to a pair of iron uprights driven deep into the soil. The posts themselves nowhere come into contact with the ground. I had also voyaged frequently on the Volga, but I had never seen the river spreading for miles and covering every sandbank. The end of May is the time of flood, but in this last May the Volga was higher than for many years past, and the current was swift even in these lower reaches of the river. I do not know any mode of travel by public conveyance that is more agreeable than a voyage in a "Samolet" boat on the Volga in summer. The upper deck is for the first- and second-class passengers, and

everything is done to make travellers comfortable ; even the menu is printed in French as well as in Russian. On the lower deck the third- and fourth-class people seem to have a fairly good time of it, and the traffic of every sort is enormous. On this run from Tsaritsyn to Astrachan there is much less crowd than on the higher parts of the course, for most people join the trains at Tsaritsyn, which is convenient for many regions of Russia. The Volga below this place has spread out into a multitude of channels, separated by long wooded islands at ordinary times. Now the surfaces of the islands were submerged and the waters were rushing past the lower branches of the trees. All the way to Astrachan they extended into long vistas in every direction. Now and then some promontory was visible, and presently the steamer would call at some landing-stage. The communications with the shore had been entirely interrupted, and passengers were crossing to the village, after leaving the steamer, in small boats, also the houses of the village had been



KAMUCK HUTS ON THE VOLGA, NEAR ANCHUTSK

invaded by the water, though mostly built on piles. The colour of the flooded Volga is a red-brown, and the water is opaque, to say the least. The heavy floods of late spring come down from the great tributary of the Kama, which is fed at this period of the year by the melting of the snows on the far-distant Ural Mountains. Astrachan became visible across the vast stretch of water long before the place was reached. Naturally it is above the flood level of the river, but it stands on an island or two, still at a considerable distance from the Caspian Sea. Below Astrachan the waters prevail throughout the year, and the villages nearer the Caspian are merely collections of barges permanently moored.

The authorities in Astrachan have taken infinite trouble in planting and tending their trees, but they have left the footways of the gardens to the wear and tear of traffic. The squares and shaded avenues are nevertheless pleasant resorts on a hot day of early June. Churches are imposing in their architecture,

but it was quite difficult to find any of them open after early morning. The Buddhist Temple, the Tartar and Persian Mosques, are curious adjuncts to a city which is really in Europe, but as edifices they have nothing beautiful or even striking in their attributes. Neither Tartar nor Kalmuck has much taste in architecture, and the Russian does very little to improve matters. The Kreml, or Kremlin, of Astrachan has two or three vast square towers of some grandeur, connected by long walls which are topped by eccentric battlements. The look of the whole building is barbaric, and it could never have been of much importance as a fortress. The Kremlin as it stands to-day does not date much earlier than the time of Peter the Great, that ubiquitous ruler whose personal influence may be traced in so many parts of Russia.

The many river branches and artificial canals intersecting and surrounding the city are made interesting by the white sails of the fishing boats. The quays are lined with small craft, and the great Volga passenger steamers

come and go continually. The streets are not less untidy than is the case ordinarily in a Russian city. Here and there are patches of asphalt, and a few brick causeways for pedestrians, but none of these have any connection with the crossings. The cobblestones are malignant to the alien. There is plenty to be studied in the street in regard to mankind. The Persian or Tartar droschky driver is almost in rags, no crimson sleeves come his way. The low-class Armenian goes about in clothes of many colours, and not much of any of them. The Caucasian wears his black sheepskin hat and the rest of his picturesque costume with cartridge holders innumerable. The Bokharan has his white turban, set off by fine features and piercing eyes, with a skin nearly as black as his beard. The women's dress is mostly in dark shades, with sundry gold ornaments and the head covering as usual in Russia. Many ladies have endued themselves in Persian patterns more remarkable for contrasts in colour than for picturesque effect. It is a thing to be noted that no curios

of any kind worth buying seem attainable, and that none of the materials shown in the shops at all compare with the peasants' work purchasable in Moscow or Odessa. It was not the season for Astrachan jackets in the month of May, Old Style. I have been told that peasants' work can be bought in the villages near Astrachan, but at the time these places were almost inaccessible by reason of the all-pervading Volga. In the central part of the city there is no indication that the waters are so near, but if the ascent of a church tower were accomplished one might feel very much at sea. The only railway, that from Astrachan to Saratoff, is carried at a high level over embankments and long bridges. The departure platform is one of the uppermost points of the city, much fresher and pleasanter than many of the surrounding localities. The evening brought thunderstorms and a heavy downpour, most welcome in the region of sandhills which skirt the railway for a long distance, interspersed with the red tamarisk blossom. The

outlook westward is the Volga right to the horizon.

At sunrise came a vision of a green country, quite uncompromisingly green, and absolutely flat, with camels taking an early breakfast in the low-growing corn. Naturally camels have no business to be in the corn, but they are at home in this region which, according to all authorities, is Desert and therefore most congenial to the camel. As the train moves on there were more camels, in herds of twenties and thirties, kept to bounds by small boys. These creatures seemed to look upon the train as an interloper, and were much excited by the noise of its passing. Presently the camels in view were those harnessed to the telega, the national country cart of Russia. And then there were horses and sheep, cattle and goats, little farm steadings and some larger buildings scattered over the countryside. Great villages were entirely of wooden houses, and had grown up at no great distance from the railway stations. These occurred at intervals of about an hour,

and there were generally crossings for the train service every half-hour. The steppe was treeless, except that a few saplings at the stations were doing their best to become important. Probably there were never any trees in this region ; it was certainly an unploughed virgin land until the railway came, seven years ago. Plentiful rains when they occurred must always have resulted in good pasturage. The maps take very little account of these parts, and are quite satisfied to record the "Country of the Kirghis Horde," or the "Kalmuck Tribes." A horde seems somehow much the same as a robber band, but perhaps the Kirghiz Horde seldom did anything to deserve such a comparison. At any rate, it is not now necessary to make the acquaintance of its members, or to get permission for traversing its territory. Last June the International Sleeping Car Company provided its usual accommodation in the daily trains between Astrachan and Saratoff, so there was no sort of difficulty about travelling in luxury or in watching camels quite as comfortably as in

Egypt or Algeria. On those maps which endeavour to be up to date appear rivers and salt lakes as the prominent characteristics. The lakes are not supposed to be visible from the train, but as to the rivers—well, there is a bridge here and there over a winding hollow in the steppe, but it is waterless. Only because there are so few breaks in the level plain can it be considered necessary to record these titular rivers, and it would certainly seem better worth while to insert the names of the large and flourishing villages already mentioned. There must be water available, for there were wells in the farmyards, and water-tanks which the locomotive visited in leisurely fashion, while the passengers occupy the platform until the customary three bells make it starting time. All the available population of the neighbourhood was in attendance, and it was rather a pretty sight when the children with flowers formed an unconscious procession after business slackened, their bouquets contrasting with the reds and blues of their own array.

The Kalmuck is not handsome, but he

is of good stature, and these people have usually clear large eyes. The Kirghiz is a small brown man with a somewhat cunning expression. These Tartars have proverbially some resemblance to the Russian, and in these lands east of the river the Tartar is on his own ground. It is the Russian who has migrated, to become the agriculturist of this region. He has established the usual accessories, the towering churches two or three of them in each village of any importance, the green-roofed bungalow for the chief resident, the official quarters and often the soldiers' barracks. That he has prospered in the few years since the new railway made commerce possible is a self-evident fact. It is attested by the piles of grain nearly blocking access to the stations, by the stacks from last year's great harvest dotted over the fields, by the fresh green of the coming crop. All are clear signs of prosperity and of an important addition to the wealth of Russia, contributed from just one of the many still half-developed territories of the Empire.

It is said that the Tsar has now accepted the offer of his Kalmuck subjects to join the Russian Army. These people should make quite as fine soldiers as the Cossacks. From what can be ascertained, their action in offering their services is entirely voluntary, as conscription has never been extended to these tribes.

CHAPTER XVII

THE WHEAT FIELDS OF THE VOLGA

IT is not easy to realise the relative extent of European Russia as compared with the countries that are nearer and in ordinary times more accessible from England. Express trains would take a traveller across the whole German Empire from west to east in about fourteen hours. This may be quite useful to remember when we read of those transfers of German troops from one frontier army to another, though the railway journey from Aix-la-Chapelle to Kalisch in Poland is not exactly the whole process which the soldier undergoes. From the Russian frontier to Moscow the fast trains took fully thirty hours, and the journey from Moscow to the Volga going eastward is quite as long. Most likely the communications east of Moscow

are very little disturbed. The war is far away, and people want to carry on their "business as usual." The reader may imagine that he has duly arrived at Samara on the Volga, and that he is not intending to go on by any of the through trains for the Siberian Line or for Central Asia. Both these destinations can be reached from the station at Samara. It is summer time, and everyone in the town discusses crop prospects, and the stores of the agricultural machine sellers are thronged from morning till night. The Russian buyer is always very deliberate, and will sit in front of the busy representative of the factory, now and then making some remark, generally quite unconnected with the business in hand. The seller knows better than to hurry him up.

No wonder that the office becomes rather too full with these men in high muddy boots and weather-stained gaberdines standing about. In spite of their unkempt appearance these are substantial landholders, who probably have a roll of bank-notes in the safest

part of their attire. They would think themselves quite unbusinesslike if they did not bargain for all the moratorium that they can get, and a year's credit is the understood basis for transactions. The prosperity of the town is entirely bound up with the success of the country round. This development is a recent affair, as the cultivation of grain on a large scale began hereabouts no more than thirty years ago. To-day the orchards and woodlands have all the appearance of long settlement, and the outlook which includes these features and the great river Volga below is a very striking one. There are a few places in the world where at time of harvest the wheat fields occupy the whole landscape in a level plain. An instance of this sort occurs not far from Samara, on the alluvial flats attributed to Volga floods of long past seasons.

It was planned for a party to go out a few miles from Samara to see a new ploughing engine at experimental work. Our conductor was a German farmer from the other side of the district, and we travelled on the platform

of the only third-class carriage, all the rest of the train was made up of fourth class. It was a hot morning well on in last July, and we had been promised a conveyance from the little station, but we just had to walk. My comrade is not very good as a rule about rapid progress afoot, but our German friend went off at a great pace by a field path skirting the wood and rich with antirrhinum and cornflower, together with pink and white mallows and convolvulus. The property belongs to a prince who has a very good house and garden, and plenty of knowledge of English. However, he was away from home, so his agent supplied us with a rattle-trap droschky for our further undertakings. The engine presently came into view at an enormous distance out on the undulating steppe, and we were pleased to arrive finally at the tent after having finished our inspection of the machine and followed the ploughs up to the turning point. Our host at the tent near at hand is a Baltic Provinces man, to whom Russian and German are alike familiar, as of

course they are to our German friend. The camp had lasted for some time as it was needful to carry out sundry trials of the engine and its subsidiary ploughs. The apparatus is of British make, and the sale price about £1200, so that farming must be fairly profitable in those regions if there is a prospect of sale for such an engine.

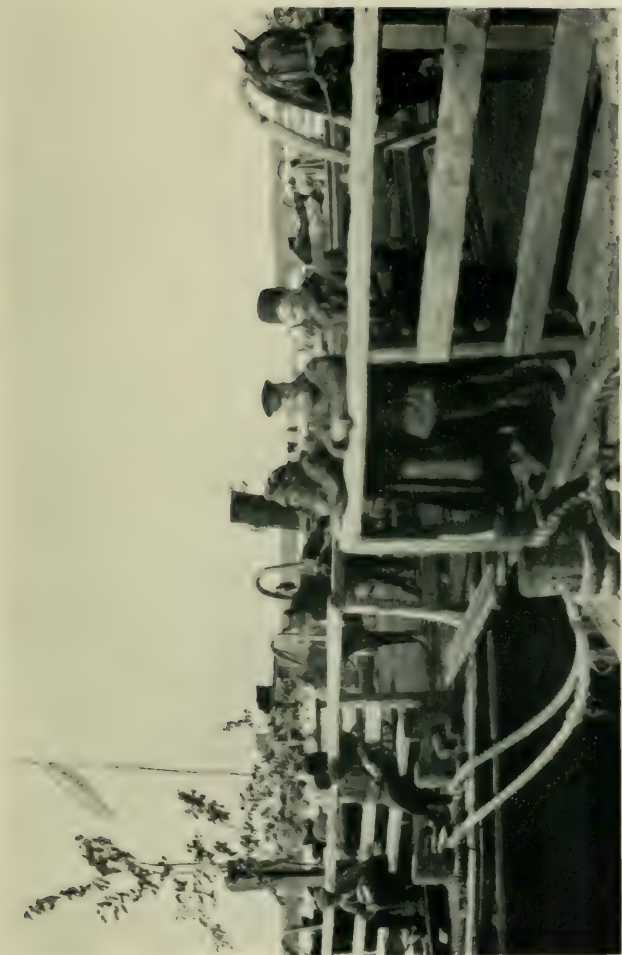
A visit paid to the German farmer's own home necessitated a motor drive of a good many miles from Samara over such roads that the resident who invited me to go made up his mind not to buy a motor. If this drive was to be any guide, the discomfort of a journey beyond the pavements of Samara were clearly too great. We found the farmer amongst his orchards, very much occupied with his pigs destined to provide sausages for the Volga markets. The Province of Samara is as large as England, and is served by three railways only, which are supplemented for six months of the year by the Volga. The climate is not exactly a genial one, but is favourable for many kinds of produce unless

hot winds from Central Asia are prevalent for any length of time. In spring and in autumn the town is surrounded by an expanse of mud, and communication throughout the district becomes nearly impossible. In winter everything is fast frozen up, and there is a cart road on the Volga. The craft laid up on the smaller river Samarka are hard and fast in ice for six months. A resident friend said to us, "In winter we sleep, but when the ice breaks then we begin to live." In May and June come down the floods from the melted snows, and the favourite ride through the woodlands is ten or twenty feet below the surface of the waters. Like most Russian towns of its sort, Samara has one or two fine streets well cared for and lined with good buildings, but such are very occasional in the rest of the town. It is a place full of interest in many ways, but not at all to be recommended as a permanent residence.

On my first visit to the Volga I was anxious to get a drive into the country, and a casual acquaintance volunteered to charter a droschky

on reasonable terms. We had some parley with the driver and had made very little advance towards a bargain, when my friend said, "You must be easy because the hirer does not speak Russian." The man threw up his hands. "Show me the man who does not speak Russian, I will take him cheap," and he did, for he could not believe in such ignorance. On the river steamer just afterwards, I found that one waiter was told off to look to my wants because he had a few words of English, learnt in America. He told me quite proudly, "English is very rare on the Volga." Since then I have heard it there more frequently, though not from waiters.

It is the Volga itself which gives such charm to this region. The great stream, league after league, almost everywhere a mile wide and sometimes much more than this, bears a vast quantity of picturesque craft on its waters. The huge rafts of timber floating down-stream so slowly are often four hundred yards in length. The steersman and a companion or two live for the necessary weeks in a small



AT A FERRY ON THE VOLGA (KAIMUCK TYPES)

frame house on the raft, and exert all their energies in steering with an enormous oar-shaped pole. There are recognised points where it is necessary to take a tug to guide the craft, and one of these points is at The Bridge. The timber-laden barges act more independently, as they can hoist a sail, but the last time that I travelled up-stream I saw two of these great vessels against the piers of the bridge with one side stove in. Of course they kept afloat, for they had nothing but timber in their composition. The wooded dells among the cliffs by the river are favourite haunts for nightingales, and when the steamer steers near the shore the effect is beautiful. Recurrently for an immense distance at a time the western steppes come to the river edge in rectangular cliffs, all of the same height for miles together, and their sides uniformly steep. I have no geological explanation to offer, but the strata are practically level in all these cliffs. The rocks vary in colour most effectively, but the regularity of their parallels is quite uniform. It gives the idea that all

these strata from first to last were laid down beneath calm seas, and that the process was never disturbed by any earthquake or volcanic dislocation. Probably there are other parts of the world where a similar phenomenon exists, but I do not know any such. The stopping-places on the river are frequent, and the wonderful medley of travellers is even more remarkable than at the trains, while in summer the shallows make an approach to some of the piers a work of time. One is reminded of the Mississippi Pilot when the boatswain calls the soundings by ejaculating something that might well be "Mark Twain."

The greatest city on the Volga is Saratoff, and the view of it from the river, whilst the boat is still some miles away, is very imposing. The town stands high above the water, and is encircled by hills which here reach some hundreds of feet above the general level of the steppe. It is a very busy scene, as the steamers are in constant motion, and of all descriptions and sizes. The barges and rafts that have no call to make at Saratoff take an outer channel,

as the Volga is three miles wide here and the sandbanks are many.

The city is picturesque enough, with the great churches standing among gardens or in the centre of some square, and there is more smooth pavement than in Russian towns generally. The coloured roofs are so various too, reds of many shades, two or three different greens, while grey and black form only a minority. From so many street corners the far-spreading Volga is seen, and it is evident that the place has been laid out by those who had an eye for a landscape. Of course it is all very different in winter. Then the river is only an expanse of unsafe ice, for the current underneath is sometimes strong and the level is apt to alter.

I know of only one Englishman in Saratoff, but I cannot let the occasion pass without recording my obligations for many acts of kindness and consideration on the part of Mr. John Golden.

It was when travelling to Saratoff by rail that I met with an American who was in a

great hurry to get to Astrachan for one day only. He was coming back to Petrograd immediately, a really vast undertaking in such hot weather and across that desert railway, which I then regarded with more awe than I retain now that I am personally acquainted with it. My American friend wanted me to read what was said about Astrachan in my Baedeker, but I do not remember whether it was the French or the German. I came to some information about the fifty thousand fishermen of Astrachan, which he promptly asked me to repeat. Perhaps he was quite anxious to tell me his errand at Astrachan, but I think that I had the clue to it as soon as I heard that a cold storage for fish had been established on those shores of the Caspian. Some remembrances of one more eastward journey will exhaust all that I have to record of this part of Russia. From Samara I went out for another twelve hours' rail to Orenburg. This is actually the last place in Europe, and beyond it lies Central Asia, a land still encompassed with

special precautions against the inquiring foreigner. Perhaps the precautions are survivals of a state of things which has entirely altered ; however, the fact remains that none but Russians are allowed in Turkestan unless armed with special permission from Petrograd.

Leaving the station at Samara, the train follows the course of the river Samarka, at a respectful distance, for this stream does a good deal of overflowing in the course of the year. The slopes and the higher steppes are well cultivated for many miles, and the blue hills beyond the river are also under crops. At Kinel is the parting of the ways, for Siberia and for Turkestan respectively. Kinel and other new settlements, entirely the outcome of the railways, remind one greatly of the far west of Canada or the United States. The same weatherboard houses alternate with the shack dwelling, and the neat garden enclosures of some people are contrasted with the happy-go-lucky style of over the way.

As Orenburg is approached, the bleak aspect

of the steppe gives way to a country of pleasant valleys and woodland scenes. Even in this region, so far from navigable waters, the level is quite a low one, and the streams meander through pasture land not unlike our own. At Orenburg the first building noticeable is the minaret of a mosque, and this may well be the case, for mosques are as plentiful as churches are on this frontier of Asia. The people are Asiatic too, at least many of them are so. They come in to Orenburg for the fairs, throughout the summer, so that there are Khivans and Tashkendskias, men from Western Siberia, and from the Ural. The little one-storey bazaars are hung with all manner of bright-coloured stuffs, which are said to be the productions of Samarkand or Bokhara. Every vendor endeavours to persuade the stranger that he alone has a stock of the genuine camels'-hair scarves, and it is possible that the belts with Arabic devices have been fashioned on the banks of the Oxus. It is quite probable that some of the materials were woven on Asiatic soil from the

cotton of Kokand, but one need not come all the way from the North of England to buy cotton goods at Orenburg. However, if time is no object and patience is exercised, there are favourable chances of securing some interesting mementoes from this most curious town. The great bazaar, Gostiny Dvor, was not occupied on the day of my visit, which was on a Russian holiday, but the quaint corners with Mongolian attendants in charge were made more interesting by the attempts of an attendant to talk pidgin English. I was able to form a theory on the subject of his efforts in that direction, but I am not sure that my version of the language was understood by him. A year or two ago, on a voyage to South America, I had met with an English surveyor who had just been at work on the levels and plans for a projected railway from Orenburg eastward in the direction of Semipalatinsk on the Irtysh River. He had made some stay at Orenburg in company with two or three other Englishmen, and possibly the pidgin English had been learnt from them.

I should much like to be able to record what I was told of the surveyors' experiences in the wilds of Southern Siberia, but that is their business, not mine.

I have got a long way from the wheat fields of the Volga, but all these regions have similar climates, and I am accustomed to thinking of them as affording similar results from season to season.

CHAPTER XVIII

A RUSSIAN FOLLOWER OF ROOSEVELT

IT was in the train coming away from Samara that we found ourselves, as usual, the only people who could speak English, so we quickly scraped acquaintance. We were both of us bound for distant destinations. His journey was into the south-west, near Kischeneff in Bessarabia, and mine was along the same route as far as Kharkoff. By the time that we had travelled a few hours to the Bridge we were quite ready to discuss the question of the safety or otherwise of this wonderful structure. The Bridge looks very imposing from the Volga steamer as the boat passes under it, and at a distance it seems so unsubstantial that one is inclined to hold the breath when a train embarks upon it. The actual crossing conveys a different sensation,

for it can be realised that the piers are strong and that the pace of the train is very slow. Nevertheless it is said that engine drivers are wont to say their prayers before they take their train on the Bridge. It has stood now for near forty years, and they are very careful about constant repairs, so perhaps it may last our time, but the ice floes of the spring must try it severely. Of all this we discoursed as we went onwards to Sysran. There it befell us to have to spend the night and to suffer a considerable delay. But if my friend found as much interest in my conversation as I was able to do in what he told me, there was no regret for the prolongation of the journey. He had been brought up in Bessarabia, and had run away from home when he was about fifteen. He had been exploited by an emigration agent and taken, chiefly in cattle trucks, across Europe to Hamburg, whence he was shipped off to the United States. Finding work there with an Irishman, he had acquired the English language with an unconscious brogue, which had not survived. He had

managed after some time to enter himself as a medical student, and in due time to qualify for his profession, attaining at length to an important position in a Chicago hospital. Owing to an affection of the throat he had to give up this post, and had gone to live in Texas at a town on the Mexican border. He had a sheaf of newspapers with him all about the shooting of Mr. Benton by the Mexican General Villa. The events recorded by these local papers lost nothing in the telling, and his home was close to the quarters of the corps of observation from the U.S. Army. He had given a good deal of time to the study of sheep-breeding in Texas, and was now returning from a sojourn in Bokhara in furtherance of the same study. I do not know whether his perfect knowledge of Russian had impaired at any period of his life in the United States, but clearly he had renewed his facility as to his native tongue during the year or two in the Tsar's dominions of Central Asia. We overheard two gendarmes at a side station comparing notes as to the advisability of

watching the "foreigner" who spoke Russian so fluently. His journey was undertaken in order to visit his sister still resident in the neighbourhood of Kischeneff, and afterwards he intended to return to Texas. As to his English, it wanted nothing of the usual picturesqueness of expression which is common to many dwellers in the Western States. He was rather pleased to find that I was enabled to understand his modes of speech, inasmuch as I had long ago spent some months in California. It was really an advantage to me to travel for a day or two with a Russian of this sort quite apart from the other interesting aspects of his experiences. Whether these were embellished or not I cannot say. We naturally turned to the topic of the Russian people, as they were all around us ready for every purpose of illustration to our debates. The first thing in regard to the moujik is always the question, "Why are the peasants of Russia in such a condition of ignorance that they cannot cultivate their land properly?" This gave him a theme on

which he enlarged to considerable purpose. He recalled the facts of the Tartar invasion of the thirteenth century, and said that the Russian people stemmed the tide of this invasion and so prevented it from engulfing Europe. The Russians were well advanced in self-government long before that age, but their civilisation all went down before the barbarians, who enslaved the whole nation and put a stop to any sort of free institutions. For six centuries then the serfdom of the moujik had endured, for half a century he had been free. Was it likely that in so short a time the peasant could shake himself clear of the memory of his shackles and gain sufficient knowledge to make the most of his land ?

Against this reading of history I ventured to advance the fact that when the Tsar Alexander freed the serfs their masters were not Tartars but Russian nobles, and to inquire what had become of the conquering Tartar nation. His reply was made in the first place to the query about the existence of the Tartar. He pointed to a village that

we were then passing, and said that he could see no church in that place, nothing but a mosque, or mchet, as it is called in those parts. Then he waited for the next village and the same thing was repeated. "There are some Tartars still, you see, and there remain about fifteen millions of them in Russia." As to the nationality of the Russian landowner, he agreed that there may be the Tartar descent from original conquerors, but that by intermarriage with Russians the strain had been almost lost. Nevertheless the system of serfdom imposed by those who seized the lands had been continued until the abolition by the Tsar Alexander.

After passing these bunches of Tartar villages we came to Pensa, an immense town scattered along hillsides overlooking a small river, an old town as Russian towns go, but founded long after Tartar invasions had ceased. We had some hours to spend here, on a hot afternoon of early summer. Facilities for walking are no better at Pensa than in other places of its kind, and it is really not

good enough to drive far on those cobblestones for pleasure. So we watched the selection of some horses for the Army. This ceremony was under the supervision of a General, who took up a position under the shade of the trees with a table and numerous papers in front of him. The open square afforded plenty of room for the display of the animals. The usual routine was carried through in respect of each horse, and every point made was most carefully recorded at the General's table. There were about fifty animals brought out, and we amused ourselves by carrying on a scheme of inspection on our own account. Unfortunately our list by no means coincided with the acceptances and rejections of the Staff. I am afraid that our selection might have resulted unfavourably for the Russian Army, but this was two months before the war, and there would have been time to rectify matters.

It is in a journey like this one, which lasted for more than two days, that one comes to realise the extent of Russian resources. From

Pensa all the way to Kharkoff there were crops to be seen throughout the daylight hours, and in June there are many daylight hours. As usual, the cultivation is about equally divided between the landowners and the moujik. The latter may be a tenant of the landowner, or he may be working communal property belonging to the village. I took the opportunity of asking my fellow traveller about the new laws permitting the villages to allot communal lands in permanence, as I wished to hear his opinion on its working. He said that it would probably take a long time to get the new plan generally adopted, for there are many obstacles and prejudices to be overcome. The old system provides for invariable residence in the village, and the peasant as well as the peasant's wife prefers society to solitude. Also if they go out to live miles away on their own farm, what are they to do in case of sickness, and how are they to come to church? Besides all this, there is the difficulty of making a proper apportionment of the communal lands.

It is one thing to accept a somewhat unfertile or ill-situated piece of land for a short time, with the expectation of taking turn on the best lands later. It is quite another matter to become proprietor of a second-rate farm and to know that somebody else has been allotted in permanence a much better piece. No doubt in due time the benefits of ownership and of residence on the farm will outweigh these prejudices, but my friend thought that not within the lifetime of this generation would the new regulations come universally into practice. Meantime the moujik goes on with his ineffective methods of cultivation, and in some seasons the production of agricultural Russia is appreciably impaired thereby. It is not so bad in normal years, when the spring opens at the right date and the rains come at the proper moment. Then the landowner's deep ploughing has no visible advantages over his neighbour's perfunctory work, and both sets of crops are much on a par. But if ploughing and sowing have to be delayed owing to a late or unfavourable season, and

rains keep off, the peasant's crop fails, and the landowner is the only man with a harvest worth reaping. Nevertheless there is advance; the moujik no longer sows broadcast, but buys his drills and finds means to pay for them.

As we left behind us the eastern regions and approached the territory known as Little Russia, the character of the country became more fertile and the growth of beetroot was extensive. Large numbers of women were busy with their hoes amongst the thick rows of plants. Sugar factories are frequent all through this district.

My fellow traveller tried to expound to me the reasons why ex-President Roosevelt was the only man worthy of support by all good citizens of the United States, and absolutely scouted my tender of the opinion of another American whom I had met on a previous journey. He varied the proceedings by attacking the equanimity of one of those kid-gloved inspectors of tickets who evidently owe their position to some influence quite apart from their claims to efficiency.

“I have been always a member of the Russian Church, and I am a convinced follower of Roosevelt. I think the combination cannot be beat, neither in Russia nor in America.” At this point we arrived at Kharkoff and went our several ways.

CHAPTER XIX

YALTA AND THE BAIDAR GATE

THE small bay of Yalta would be impracticable as a shelter but for the substantial pier which serves as a breakwater against the long rolling waves of the Black Sea. From the eastward the steamers usually come to their moorings at this pier before daybreak, so that until we went on deck we had no idea that the Imperial yacht *Standart* was the next vessel along the quayside. Naturally we did not wait beyond the few minutes requisite for a glass of tchai. We had, of course, no sort of expectation of going on board, but we could see a good deal of this distinguished craft from the quay, and to that nobody seemed to object. Presently there was a great stir on board, and lines of naval officers forming up.

Then came a carriage, and some very high official went up the gangway, where he was received with elaborate salutes and the Russian National Anthem was played. We had hoped that it might be the Tsar himself, but this was not to be. We were told that the distinguished visitor was probably one of the Grand Dukes, but we were quite satisfied to have seen the reception, and the personality did not much interest us when he was evidently not the Tsar. We knew our way about Yalta fairly well, and were glad to see it all decked out with wreaths and flags in honour of the Tsar's arrival the day before. They always come to Yalta, or rather to the palace of Livadia, in the yacht, generally embarking at Nicolaieff and spending the night on the water. They do say that the decorations of Yalta on these occasions are done by command, then some people always take a gloomy view of such efforts at gaiety. Yalta has often been described, but its general impressions of sunshine reflected from the mountain crags, bright-coloured roofs and golden pinnacles,

live in the memory more than any detailed account of its charms is likely to do. In that April when we saw the *Standart* at the quay, the gardens were full of hyacinths and tulips, and the miles of rose bushes were covered with large buds. We took the customary drive to Oreanda, and lingered in the ruined palace overgrown with jasmine and rose trees, magnolia flowers, and tall ferns where once had been the basement. Only a Russian Grand Duke would have accepted the destruction by fire, and would have left for many years, pillar and alley, plinth and doorway, to this riot of growth, while he himself was satisfied to dwell in a so-called cottage within the garden precinct. The outlook from Oreanda seems somehow appropriate to the picturesque name. Upwards from the deserted terrace rise the chestnut woods crowned by towering cliffs, and below again are rocks and the dark blue sea stretching away to Yalta and its sheltering steeps. The road to Oreanda passes by the vineyards of Livadia, but not very near to the palaces where the

Imperial flag was hoisted. The domain is best seen from the sea, as it is all on the mountain side, and therefore quite open in that direction. It may well be a holiday place for the Tsar, if he ever gets the chance of relaxation.

Prince Vorontsoff, who was Governor in these parts about a century ago, planned the road over the mountains to Sebastopol, and the work still bears his name. They show his château at Aloupka, one of the finest situations in the Crimea. As in many of the villages, there is at Aloupka quite a large Tartar population, and the minaret of the mosque is a conspicuous point in the landscape. On this part of the road military officers and their families spend a good deal of time, for it is the favourite drive from Yalta. The colour and variety of the uniforms are among the first things to attract the foreigner's notice. Many of the officers are on the retired list and are resident at Yalta, Aloupka, or Simeis, another picturesque spot. The motor diligence from Yalta to

Sebastopol was at that time making a daily journey, and we managed to get favourable seats. I am told that the transit in the opposite direction down the steep way from among the hill-tops and on towards Aloupka is regarded as dangerous for these automobiles. We met one of them just at the sharpest of the many zigzags, and could see that our chauffeur was relieved when the moment of meeting on that incline was past and over. As we climbed, the lines of wooden carts with a majority of sleepy drivers had ceased to interfere with our progress, and the view out to sea grew more and more magnificent. Wisps of fog hid the base of the cliffs from our sight and seemed to lend an additional air of mystery to the distance.

The aiguilles and snow-flecked crags now came into sight just overhead, as the road became a mere shelf following the contour of the rocky slopes. We found it quite impossible to identify our future route from this point, for the road was only one of the many traverses in the face of the next precipice.



FROM THE BAIKAL GATE, THE BLACK SEA

Then through a gallery came a vision of a five-domed church in silhouette, standing high above the road. The zigzags led quickly upward, and soon we were looking down on the pinnacles of the solitary building, with its background of forest sheer down to the sea. We had made the acquaintance of a Russian officer who was a fellow traveller, and who talked French as well as was necessary. He had been pointing out some of the views as we climbed. The Baidar Gate was once the boundary between the Turk and his vassals the Crimean Tartars. The Sultan intended to keep this southern garden territory to himself, and so he fortified the pass against the Emir and his followers. Prince Vorontsoff's road has reduced the Gate to a kind of Old Temple Bar, and the automobile passes through it without stopping. A short distance further brought us to the shanty which does duty for hotel, but neither the officer nor ourselves were inclined to risk lunch inside it. So we all walked back through the Gate and stood on the highest

terrace, with the Black Sea nearly three thousand feet below us. We were told how there were formerly vineyards down below the precipitous descent, but the phylloxera had devastated them and horse-breeding had now been adopted as a means of utilising the land. We had noticed the long loops of the descending tracks, much after the fashion of a pass in Switzerland. Henceforward the sea was left behind, and the road took us through woodlands carpeted with blue squills and decorated with tall yellow asphodel. They were in great beauty, and fully maintained the reputation of the Crimea as a land of flowers. So we came to one village after another, all in the occupation of Tartar families. There was not much to recommend any of them, unless it were to the notice of the village carpenter, if such an official existed. There was ample scope for his energies in repair of verandas and fences, combining therewith a general setting to rights. The absence of fresh paint or of any attempt at neatness is, however, not confined

to the Tartars in these parts. The road left the woods presently, and we could see in front how it took its course over the undulating steppe. We were naturally much interested in this region, for it was the scene of the siege of Sebastopol and the Crimean War. We were rather diffident about mentioning this to our military friend, but soon found that he had not the least objection to discussing those events. Indeed he began very soon by pointing out to us the monument of the charge of the Light Brigade close to the long valley of the Six Hundred. To the Russian captain the Crimean War was a thing of past history exclusively, though to ourselves it conveys other memories. He certainly exerted himself to show us all that could be seen by way of memorial without a trace of consciousness that we were interested on different sides. We made up our minds that the Russian version of the Crimean War must be at variance with our own. It is borne in upon one that the permanent results of the struggle did not amount to much, and certainly they

did not in the least compensate for the great loss of life on both sides.

Our military friend took a courteous farewell on the arrival at Sebastopol station, expressing the wish that "La Manche sera heureuse pour Madame" by way of good-bye to my wife. Continentals always consider the Channel a very terrible place.

CHAPTER XX

ROUND ABOUT SEBASTOPOL

IN his Autobiography, Sir Evelyn Wood has described with military precision the siege of Sebastopol, where he served as midshipman. How exact his records are can only be realised from visiting the actual scenes of the war. In every page of those early chapters of the book there is some allusion to local circumstances which becomes perfectly clear when one is on the very spot. Sebastopol must always be a name of deepest interest to Englishmen, a name in which pathos is mingled with appreciation of the courage that led to eventual victory. Even though we are now engaged in a contest so much vaster and fraught with greater issues, yet the Crimean War will not be forgotten. It is sixty years ago, and there has been a lapse

of time sufficient to dim the issues involved, substituting other aims then undreamt of.

At Eupatoria it was that our forces landed, no more than an open roadstead. The small town of white houses and domes lies in the flat land far away from the Crimean mountains or the steep cliffs of the southern coasts. The largest dome is that of the church, and next to it is the mosque. Greeks and Turks seem to make up the majority of the population, for there are certainly not many Russians visible.

The steamer after leaving Eupatoria approaches higher land, and the peaks of the inland ranges make a fine picture as the valley of the Alma is passed, and in an hour or so the outer harbour of Sebastopol is reached. The city is picturesquely situated. Let us imagine Portsmouth surrounded by treeless heights, with deep ravines at intervals. We can at once identify the dockyard, the battle-ships, the launches in constant motion, the barracks, and the busy landing-places. The white town and the long stretch of forts,

varied by stony slopes, are in sharp contrast with the deep blue of the sea and of the two bays that form the harbours of Sebastopol. Like other purely Russian towns on these shores it is entirely modern, and there is nothing of the Oriental tinge excepting amongst the village Tartars who come in to sell their wares. The Russian Government has gradually discouraged the use of the port for any other purpose than as a naval headquarters, and passenger steamers are barely tolerated, while ordinary mercantile enterprise has no scope whatever at Sebastopol. The Black Sea squadron is at anchor in the outer harbour or North Bay for the greater part of the year. Sometimes it may be seen in motion and out for manœuvres. All the vessels were built on the Black Sea, for the treaty as to the Russian ships being prohibited from passing Constantinople is still in existence, though it must be abrogated by the action of the Turks in attacking Russia. Recalling the combination of forces at the Crimean War is enough to show how far we

have advanced since then. Perhaps the Turkish Government in risking so much in support of the Kaiser is counting on the "Concert of Europe," which so often saved Turkey from the consequences of misdoing. If there is one result from the present war that seems quite obvious, it is that a Concert of Europe will never again help the Turk.

During our halt at Sebastopol on one occasion, we watched the transfer of a destroyer from its winter quarters on a slip to the deck of a float. The operation was accomplished by means of hydraulic winches on board of the larger craft, and was rather a lengthy task. When the destroyer had been duly shipped on the wide deck the two vessels found their way across the small harbour (South Bay) to the dockyard repairing shed, where the destroyer was to be unshipped and probably painted.

Sebastopol has its memorials of the siege. The Museum of the Defence is full of relics, and the new cathedral on the hill-top within the city holds monuments of the principal

naval officers killed whilst maintaining the resistance. The naval forces had very little to do afloat, and many officers were working in unison with the army operations. High above the dockyard, at a considerable distance, is the Malakhoff, and beyond it the Redan. It does not need any military training to realise that when Malakhoff and Redan were captured Sebastopol became untenable.

To go to Inkerman it is best to take a boat, and the North Bay has much of interest to the visitor. In the first place the men-of-war are passed, and the ships look trim and imposing, though individually no match for the *Goeben*. Probably the question of gunnery is a very important one in deciding such a point as that suggested. These ships have their practice targets moored in the Inkerman river, so the excursionist has sometimes an opportunity of judging the marksmanship of the gunners during the summer when these targets were towed to sea. The gun practice has certainly been beneficial, when they could put the *Goeben* out of action at the first shot.

High above the Tchernaiia flats are the two-thousand-year-old quarries cut out in every direction and undermining the cliff face, but still worked. Two churches were cut out of the rocks, hewn, it is said, by some of the earliest Christians sent to work here during the persecutions. Among them was St. Clement, whose picture is in nearly every South Russian church. The battlefield of Inkerman is far up the hillside, considerably above the top of the quarries. It will probably be best to refer the reader to some recognised authority for any account of this battlefield; it has often been described.

The morning drive to Balaclava was quite the most interesting of our excursions. The driver's intelligence was not equal to the smartness of his new droschky, and he missed the way, with the agreeable result that we found ourselves crossing flowery slopes, varied by the presence of occasional rocky ridges. When we reached a road once more it was decided to be one of "ours," made for the British transport up from Balaclava Harbour

THE ACQUA-HANDOOK



to the lines. Could it be that track which Sir Evelyn Wood records as "claiming his boots in the tenacious soil," and where he saw fifteen horses trying in vain to move a gun-carriage?

When we saw it all the country was dry and hard, and we were in sight of Balaclava, wondering how the ships managed to get through that narrow entrance. Alike from the outer sea and from the hill above, the passage into Balaclava Harbour is almost invisible. Away over there on our left was the long valley famous for the charge of the Light Brigade. All round to the east and north are the mountains, at the time of our visit still capped with snow.

Balaclava is now the site of a residential town, composed chiefly of datchas among woodland and vineyard. The steep slopes which almost encircle the harbour finish off the picture of a locality both beautiful and interesting, though 'tis sixty years ago that those hills were the scene of so much endurance on the part of our soldiers. At every point

the story is outdone by the happenings of the last three months in France and Belgium, but we may still cherish our memories of the Crimean War, so stirring and so sad. Along the harbour shore we came to the landing-places constructed by our sailors, just as good to-day as when they were built in 1854.

Our walk was prolonged to the ruined Genoese fortress looking outward over the sea. The watch towers were high above us, and might have repaid the climb, inasmuch as the view of the line of cliff is very fine, but we had seen it all from the steamer on the way to Yalta.

Across the upland on the road back to Sebastopol we passed through the lines of the British entrenchments, not much more noticeable than those left elsewhere by Roman armies, but the art of entrenchment has of necessity made great progress since the Crimean campaign.

The summit of the bare steppe, which we call Cathcart's Hill, is crowned by the walled enclosure of the British cemetery. Within

we came into a garden worthy of the sunny Crimean climate. All among the cenotaphs and the headstones were thousands of plants of Madonna lily, giving promise of a profusion of blossom. Already there were hyacinths, pansies, narcissus, and many a foliage plant in vigorous growth. It is natural that we should have impressions of rigorous winters in the Crimea when thinking of that campaign. Nevertheless, such cold has not been experienced in that district since 1855, and the normal winter, in those valleys at least, is mild and sunny. The cemetery is under the charge of the British Consular authorities, and constant attention is bestowed upon the resting-places of our soldiers in this far-off land. It is not accurate to call it a strange land, for it is the country of our brave Allies.

CHAPTER XXI

THE GERMAN IN RUSSIA

IT has always been a matter worth notice in travelling about Russia that the German element seemed practically ubiquitous. For a foreigner to analyse the exact standpoint of the two nationalities is a difficult matter, and all that can be done is to state facts, without drawing any abstruse deductions from such an imperfect survey of the situation. To begin with, there are the inhabitants of the Russian Baltic provinces who are in large proportion Teutonic, though other races are also numerous about Riga, Libau, and neighbouring regions. Such are the Letts, who have their own nationality quite definitely marked, and who are much more like Scotchmen than either Russians or Germans in their appearance. All through

these provinces German is the colloquial speech, though of course Russian is used officially, and is generally understood. To continue the account of long-established German-speaking people, let us cross European Russia to the shores of the Volga. Here we find large communities, chiefly agricultural in their pursuits, where the whole framework corresponds to some Swiss commune even to the style of the church and the high-pitched gables of the farmhouses. I think that there is among these Volga communities more resemblance to the German-Swiss than to the German surroundings of the present day. Many of the names are certainly Swiss, where one may find a new Luzern and a Solothurn, though the next village may be Orloffskaia, which sounds very Russian.

These are all colonies established by the Empress Catherine, who was herself a German. The colonies occur along the middle course of the Volga, intermittently covering a long distance. Before their time doubtless the banks of the river were in the hands of the nomad

tribes from the Asiatic steppe, and Catherine's object was to utilise the soil so evidently fertile. That her policy was a sound one may be shown by the vast results, for the prosperity of these villages is obvious, and the Volga provinces add much to the cereal production of the Empire. Whether the colonists came originally from Switzerland or from Germany they still retain their language, which is in fact current in the large towns all along the Volga. If, as sometimes happens, it is difficult to find the Russian mode of expressing oneself, it is tolerably certain that German will solve the point. All business men speak German in this eastern side of Russia in Europe, and very many of them have German names. Even in the Kalmuck town of Tsaritsyn both of these statements hold good.

Let us turn to the great trade centres of South Russia and try to marshal the facts there as to the position of the German. At the ports he always is well in front, as Berlin and Frankfort houses have their branches in every place of importance, and at these

branches the whole staff is usually German. The export trade has gradually assumed large proportions not only with Hamburg and Bremen, but with Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Scandinavian ports. All this business has become so interdependent that the German house well established on the spot can hardly fail to secure it, more especially as the sub-agents up and down the country districts are of the same nationality as a rule. I am speaking of things as they were before the war. Since its outbreak and Turkey's concurrence, Germans and everyone else have lost their season's business in Russia.

It is of course not very easy for the foreigner to distinguish between the German from Berlin and the German-speaking Russian subject from Riga or Courland, but the impression always given at the South Russian ports has been one of German trade supremacy. At some of the interior towns the people in the shops apparently talked German in preference to their own Russian language, while even in British businesses one finds

nearly all the sub-managers and clerks with German names and appearance. Again, some of these very competent and polite people are probably from the Russian Baltic provinces. I have met several good friends from those parts and they are certainly whole-hearted Russians. In the cosmopolitan cities of Odessa and Rostoff-on-Don, German speech is far more frequent than any other foreign tongue, for there are residents from every part of manufacturing Austria and Germany.

It is unquestionably the case that a great enthusiasm for the present war exists in Russia ; indeed, from many indications it may be judged that Russians remain as anxious to fight Germany as the Germans were to attack Russia when the Potsdam ultimatum was launched. For this frame of mind there must be some strong compelling reasons, as the Russian is not prone to disturb himself unduly about foreigners in general, and would always rather live and let live. The people are not, however, at all inclined to take this view about Germany, and their dislike seems

to be impartially distributed between the Berlin Government and certain classes of German residents in Russia. As regards the conduct of public affairs, the Russian is convinced that Germany has had a good deal too much to say in Russian matters in the past. That the interference is of long standing does not improve the case, and even if the German domination at Court is admitted to have originated two centuries ago, that seems all the more reason for the change which has now taken place. Peter the Great named his new capital Petrograd, and it was the Germanised rulers after his day who altered his title. Throughout Russia the same thing went on, and it was necessary to be in favour with the German courtiers to become prosperous in Russian circles. The Baltic provinces had recently become part of the Empire, and they influenced the Palace in favour of the Teuton, in accord with claims of race and language. The Tsars themselves had become partly German, and when the throne came into the possession of the Empress Catherine of Anhalt

everything was managed on German principles. The close concord brought about by intermarriages kept the Courts in touch long after the people had come to feel that the German was more than their match in business methods.

The rapid rise to power which has marked the career of the House of Hohenzollern in the last fifty years made itself strongly felt across the Russian frontier. Bismarck and his master were always most anxious to keep friendly with the Tsar, but the Russians firmly believe that Bismarck did all that he could to prevent Russia from entering into other alliances which might increase her latent strength. Russia perhaps was persuaded by Berlin that she did not want any share in the partition of spheres of influence in Africa, because the Germans were afraid that there might not be enough desirable property to go round, and they wanted to get their place in the sun. It was Germany, they say, who took the lead in telling Japan to evacuate

Port Arthur after the war with China in 1895, so that when Russia found the place derelict and occupied it, the enmity of Japan was at once aroused and the Russo-Japanese War followed. It is clear that this is the Russian view of events, and that it is considered in that country to be entirely Germany's doing as to the Japanese War from first to last. After the conclusion of peace the Russo-German Commercial Treaty fell due for revision. Germany's terms were hard, but Russia was in no condition to resist. Then came the humiliation of the Russian people when they had to stand by and watch the Slav territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina absorbed by the Teutonic dominion of Austria. Here was a further development of the policy engineered and carried out while Russia was still unprepared, though the four years since the war had been extensively utilised.

The rising tide of indignation against Berlin began to include Vienna also after this affront, and relations with both the Germanic powers

have been the subject of interminable discussion in the Russian towns and in the country at large. The Russian takes an immense time to work out his argument, but he knows what he wants to establish and perseveres until he gets the position clear. This procedure seems to be very much that of the national army in the field.

In addition to these grievances against the Governments, there has always been the aggravation as to loss of business to the German, always ready to secure any opportunity for the exploitation of the agriculturist. It has recently been said that Germany carries on business as if it were war, and Russians think that the competitive methods of Germans are very unfair, and the establishment of co-operative societies, so widely adopted, is an endeavour to break up the power of the German export houses, and it may have some effect in that direction.

The Day came, and the Russian accepted its arrival with every sign of enthusiasm. So much was obvious from the preparations

of which I was a witness during the last days of July, when I heard the strongest hopes expressed that Germany would not back down. In Russia they only wanted the chance to pay off some of the old scores, so long accumulating. It is quite comprehensible that Russians should now desire to carry out the policy of taboo against things and persons German. The modes in which this can be accomplished are not so clear. For the German language is that of a vast number of loyal Russian subjects, and it is also the usual medium of communication with many foreigners in some of the most populous and flourishing parts of the Empire. Changes of name by persons or in places are simple enough, but the ordinary Russian usage includes in the language a large proportion of words incorporated from foreign tongues, and German has supplied a great many of these.

In their National Anthem occurs the refrain, as translated with feeling into English :

“ Earth shall to Freedom and Truth be restored,”

and with this aim in view Russians are devoting their utmost energies to the abolition of any kind of German supremacy over people of Slav race, but in the long run they are sure to be satisfied to concede equality of treatment even to their temporary foes.

CHAPTER XXII

THREE DAYS BEFORE THE WAR

IN company with a comrade from Belgium, I had been in the east of Russia for a week or two, and we had spent part of the time on the Volga quite as pleasantly as usual. After sundry wanderings we had come to the shores of the Black Sea. It was my friend's first visit to Novorossisk, and he pronounced it to be altogether unlike Russia, which is not what was intended when it was named the "New Russian Town." Certainly in that hot summer weather the mountain slopes of Caucasus were a splendid feature in the landscape, and a drive along the margin of the bay, in and out where the promontories meet the blue waters, was an experience to be remembered. No one could suppose that a bombardment was among the possibilities of the next few months.

Our good friend in the town met us with the announcement of war between Austria and Servia, and though the intelligence was rather premature, such a report set our minds to thinking out consequences. It was not easy to realise them all at once. The current of opinion seemed to assume that Russia would eventually join in, perhaps in a few weeks' time, but it was generally held that mobilisation would be a slow affair, and that there was plenty of time for negotiations in order to avert a general war. So we went on with our work and continued our programme, in which the next point was Rostoff-on-Don, though we took our tickets for a still more distant destination also on the Black Sea. Arriving at Rostoff early on the morning of the 28th July, we took the usual precaution of booking places in the train for the evening of the 29th, having the assistance in this matter of a kind friend who knew the ropes thoroughly. Next morning, Wednesday, we received a telegram from my comrade's father in Brussels informing us that Austria

had actually taken the field against Servia, and desiring us to consider our outlook carefully. The telegram ended with some suggestions as to the chances of travelling by way of Odessa and the Mediterranean. In the sender's opinion the position had evidently become rather serious, and he considered our prospects for a direct journey somewhat doubtful, to say the least. By degrees we came to the conclusion that we could not expect to do much more in Russia just now, and that a change of base would be wise policy. The train by which we had booked seats for that evening was one that started from Baku on the Caspian, and was timed to go through to Kalisch on the Polish and German frontier. This town has since become notable for one of the earliest pieces of wanton destruction by the German Army.

Inasmuch as we could, by retaining our seats in the train, have a fair prospect of reaching Warsaw, we arranged to follow this plan and went to the station in good time, an hour or so beforehand, which is the usual

course in Russia on beginning any considerable journey. We found most of the seats booked by Army officers, evidently already mobilised. That Army men were not very particular about other people's rights was proved by the experience of L——, an English fellow traveller. He had been in possession of a place all the way from Baku, thirty-six hours' transit, and suddenly found his berth captured by a resplendent person in full uniform. However, the provodnik (conductor) allotted him another location, and all was well. Throughout that night there were sundry officers at each station on the look-out for places and content to stand in the corridor if better could not be done. At the great junctions the platforms were ablaze with crowds of military costumes, even at five in the morning.

At Ekaterinoslav the corridor filled up entirely with officers of various ranks under orders to rejoin at the different depots.

There was as usual a restaurant-car with the train all day, and so we had the opportunity

of some little conversation with our fellow travellers, who seemed to prefer talking English whenever they were able to do so. As the day wore on and we entered South-Western Russia, we saw many troop trains waiting at side stations for our so-called express to pass, and there were also trains embarking horses and men at frequent intervals. Towards evening of this day, Thursday, 30th July, we began to notice that the bridges were all guarded by parties of soldiers with fixed bayonets, and that detachments were encamped at most of the stations also round about several of the villages. I had seen Austrian troops camping out in like manner along the Lemberg frontier in the spring of 1913, when they had been mobilised for months past, and showed signs of having experienced a bad time, as times were reckoned then. It is scarcely probable that Austrian troops will be on guard again to the east of Lemberg, as the Russians seem to have come to stay.

Some third-class carriages had been added

to our train, and these were filled with soldiers, officers and men travelling together in their haste to reach the rendezvous. There was but one opinion expressed by every man who talked to us, and that was one of enmity against the German Kaiser, who had stirred up this war. Considering that there had not as yet been any decided move on the part of Germany, this concurrence of ideas was rather suggestive. All seemed full of enthusiasm, and quite pleased to get an opportunity of paying off their scores against Prussia.

The great fortress of Brest Litovski is always a point of interest to the passing traveller, with the large reserve of field guns, the garrison constantly at exercises, the river channels used as moats, and the outlying batteries discernible for a few moments on leaving for the West. On this morning of Friday, the 31st July, there were aeroplanes high overhead, and others getting ready to ascend. The vast lines of barracks were quite filled with men coming and going; the wider railway platforms were crowded with

uniformed officers, including many of high rank, and it was clear that Russian mobilisation was well advanced in Lithuania.

We were due to reach Warsaw before one o'clock, and the first thing to be done there was to drive to the British Consulate ; if ever Consular advice was useful, it was in the present circumstances. Our friend L—— from Baku was to go on by the same train to Kalisch, but he considered it wise to come with us to call on my good friend the Vice-Consul, who was in command during the absence of the Consul on leave. L—— had secured at Baku his police permit for leaving Russia, but we had not yet taken out this most necessary document, which frequently requires a day at least to obtain. We found Mr. Bower St. Clair seated at the telephone, and on his release he explained that he had been busy with replies to queries from British residents for the past two days. His definite and prompt advice was to take the earliest or any train to the frontier, and to go immediately for the police permit. " Germany

has demanded Russian demobilisation. The last through train for Berlin leaves at five o'clock, after that there will be only troop trains or local ones to the Polish stations. Of course, so long as you are in Russia you will be quite safe, but after to-day no one can tell when you may be able to leave the country. I will give you a letter to the Secretary of Police, and you will find him very courteous and ready to help you. He speaks English, and I know him well. A few minutes' delay might make all the difference with the other officials, so go at once to the Secretary. I would like to accompany you and get you through, but you see that I am bound to be at the Consulate." So we departed to interview the Secretary, who was equal to the Vice-Consular description, and after about an hour spent in obtaining official signatures, all free of any cost, we emerged with the permits complete. The next thing was to put the commissionaire of the Hotel Polonia into the ever-lengthening queue at the station ticket-office to book our places for the five o'clock

train. We had scarcely begun our lunch when L—— turned up. The train which had done so much for us in the long journey from the south-east had been requisitioned for troops and was not going on to Kalisch, so L—— was also dependent on the five o'clock departure. We secured tickets for the frontier station of Alexandrovo, and Mr. St. Clair came to wish us *bon voyage*. The train was promptly filled, corridors, standing room, everything. But we did not mind, we were on our way again, and actually got off an hour or so behind time. Before we arrived at the frontier most of the crowd had left us, for they were chiefly Poles going to their country homes. They must have suffered many things since then, during the German occupations, varied by destructive evacuations of all this territory. It was already daylight when we had finished with the frontier formalities and had left Thorn behind us. The German officials were quite civil, and there was no sign of mobilisation under arms there or elsewhere in crossing the

Empire at the stations. Therefore, excepting the calling out of the Reserves, mobilisation was apparently completed in Germany before that morning of the First of August.

We arrived at Berlin about eleven o'clock, five hours late. Cooks' in Unter den Linden was our first objective, and tickets for London and Brussels respectively our chief desire. Berlin presented an extraordinary sight with the crowds of people in the streets, the orderlies galloping about, the rush to see the newspaper bulletins, the still greater rush to buy the successive editions of the *Tageblatt* or of the *Rundschau*, each filled with denunciations of Russia. It was not yet England the enemy, for our neutrality was assumed, and very little was said about France. In fact, England's rôle was to obtain the prompt demobilisation of Russia. The Tsar was the malefactor who was stirring up the barbarians against Civilisation and Culture, but we have become familiar with the sophistries which seemed so new and unexpected on that Saturday in Berlin.

L—— went on at once to London by Flushing and had a poor time of overcrowding in the Dutch train, though probably he did not mind much afterwards. Our train for Cologne and Brussels was later in the day, and we had ample time to gather impressions in the centre of Berlin on the historic day when two Ultimatums had been launched from the Schloss. It goes without saying that the enthusiasm and excitement increased as the day went on. The bulletins announced that, failing a reply from the Russian Embassy by six in the evening, mobilisation would be decreed, and that the Kaiser was to drive in from Potsdam to be ready at the Schloss when the appointed hour arrived. We were quite sorry that we could not attend the function of seeing him arrive, but we really thought it of greater importance to catch our train. It has been suggested to me that some people in my place would have missed the last train, so as to stay and see what happened. I can imagine doing such a thing on Russian soil, but not in Germany.

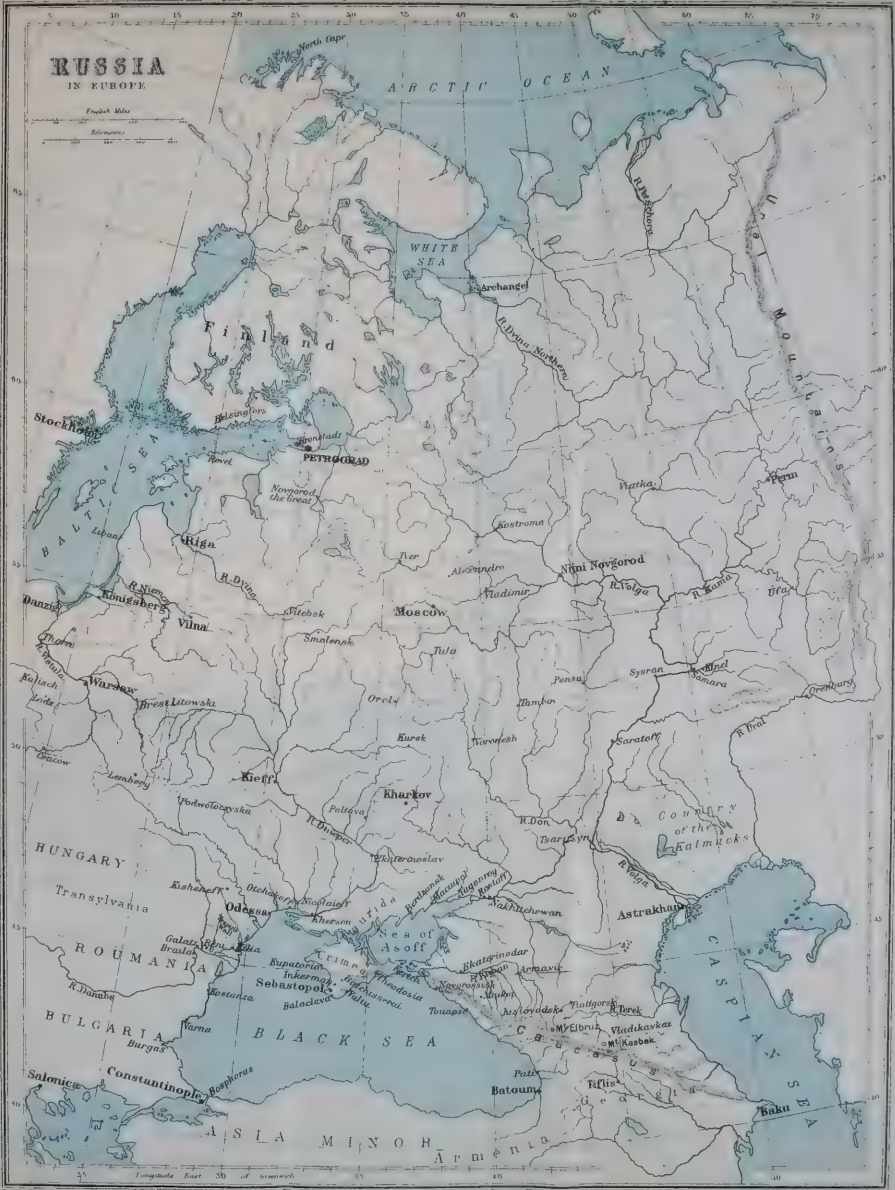
Our first stop was at Hanover Station about seven in the evening, where it was announced that the Kaiser had given the word for mobilisation. The station platforms there and at all the subsequent stopping-places were scenes of excitement, and the enthusiasm for war against the Slav was expressed in singing " Deutschland über alles " repeatedly. Reservists began to form an important proportion of the passengers, and it was evident that they were ready to join the Colours instantly, but there were no Regulars about. When at last we arrived at Cologne the concourse was vast, though it was then nearly one o'clock in the morning of Sunday, 2nd August. We soon found that there were no porters available, that there would be no more Ostend expresses from Munich, Vienna, or Basle, and those trains already *en route* had been held up. There was a mountain of baggage right along the platform representing the goods and chattels of the travellers who had managed to reach Cologne since the hour of the Kaiser's decree. However, we

discovered that a train would leave for Herbesthal at six in the morning, so we took up quarters in the station for the next five hours. In the vast halls of the restaurant there was plenty of sustenance for body and mind. It was necessary to look after ourselves, for waiters, like the porters, were all mobilised. Through the night hours the stream of people coming and going was incessant. Officers and soldiers were many, and other men, not in uniform, kept coming in with their families for the farewell before joining their Army Corps. Outside in the main street from the Rhine Bridge there was a continuous procession of tramcars filled with Reservists. They were received with enthusiasm in the streets, and the "Wacht am Rhein" was alternated with "Deutschland über alles," though occasionally both songs were in progress together, for total abstinence principles had been rather neglected. The newness of the uniforms of the German officers was noticeable, and the fine blue or grey cloth looked scarcely the most serviceable for active campaign. At last came

morning, and by eight o'clock we were across the frontier, after a walk of about half a mile from the German to the Belgian train. Past Verviers and Liège, both to become so famous in the next few days, we came at last to Brussels. My comrade's father told us that he had not expected to see us for another three weeks, and that there were at least four telegrams to Warsaw that we had not received. He had judged it to be quite necessary to provide us with funds, apart from letters of credit, if we had remained in Russia, and had discovered a method of communicating with us through the Belgian Foreign Office and the British Consulate. It was perfectly obvious to anyone who was in Brussels on that last Sunday of peace that Belgium was not going to consent to any breach of her neutrality, and it was also clear that they did not trust the Kaiser in the very least. As it was on this Sunday that Luxemburg was occupied, there was immediate confirmation of their estimate as to Prussian ideas of honour and good faith. My comrade had been long detailed to begin

the regulation sixteen months' army service in September, and had been rather sarcastic on the outlook which might limit his active duties to those of sentry before the King's palace. He joined his training corps that Sunday evening, but with the cessation of communication from Brussels it became impossible to identify his share in the work of the Belgian Army, which did so great things for the cause of Europe and of civilisation in those August days.





RUSSIA IN EUROPE

English Miles

Kilometers

INDEX

Abenskaia, Kuban, 139-144
 Acacia trees, 100, 102, 113
 Alexander I (Tsar), 121, 123
 Alexander II (Tsar), 221, 222
 Alexandre, Guide at Kieff, 61
 Alexis (Tsar), 115
 Alma (battle), 238
 Aloupka, Crimea, 231
 Anapa, Caucasias, 83, 127
 Anthem, Russian, 229, 255
 Anthony, Founder of Lavra,
 Kieff, 58
 Appanage, Imperial estate, 99
 Ararat, Mount, 152
 Archangel, 5
 Armavir, Kuban, 137, 145, 146
 Armée, Grande, 51, 121, 124
 Armenia, 130, 182, 183, 185,
 195
 Army, mobilisation, 32, 260-
 263
 — officers, 128, 147, 162, 223,
 233-236, 260-262
 — training, 33, 153, 201
 Asia, Central, 203, 212-215
 Astrachan, 8, 190, 192-196, 212
 Athens, Colonies of, 10, 11, 135
 Augustus, King of Poland, 170,
 171

T

Austria, army mobilisation, 32,
 258
 — in Galicia, 55
 Azoff, Sea of, 71, 75, 135, 179-
 181
 Baidar Gate, Crimea, 13, 233
 Baku, 151, 259, 260
 Balacclava, 12, 242-244
 Balkan War, 30, 62
 Basil's Church, St., Moscow,
 114
 Batchisserai (Crimea), 13, 14
 Batoum, 30
 Battles: Alma, 238
 — Inkerman, 242
 — Poltava, 172, 173
 Beggars, 105, 164
 Bender, Bessarabia, 35, 173
 Berdiansk, Azoff, 71
 Berlin, 53, 120, 251, 252, 253,
 266, 267
 Bessarabia, 35, 39, 173, 218
 Black Sea, 9, 10, 13, 14, 28, 31,
 35, 38, 127-138, 141, 228,
 234, 257, 258
 — Squadron, 239, 241
 Blessing of the Lights, 22
 Bombardments, 14, 138, 257

- Bosnia, 253
 Bosphorus, 11
 Boyars, 6
 Braila (Roumania), 38, 41
 Brest Litovski, Lithuania, 159, 262
 Brussels, 258, 266, 267, 270
 Burial mounds (Kurgams), 10, 79
 Business Methods, German, 254
 Byzantine art, 24, 64

 Caspian Sea, 8, 149, 193, 212
 Catacombs, Kieff, 60
 Catherine, Empress, 14, 183, 247, 248, 251
 Caucasasia, 81, 99, 128, 139-152, 257
 Cemetery, British, Crimea, 244, 245
 Central Asia, 203, 212-215
 Charles XII, King of Sweden, 170-173
 Chersonese, Crimea, 10, 13
 Chorli, Black Sea, 71
 Church architecture, 19, 44, 64, 113, 117, 124, 174
 — festivals, 16
 — music, 20
 — Orthodox, 16, 19, 20, 44, 124, 174
 — Catholic, 44
 Churches, Polish, 45, 52, 54
 Clement, St., Bishop of Rome, 11, 12, 19, 242
 Coinage and Currency, 134, 136, 160

 Cologne, 267, 268
 Colonies, founded by the Empress Catherine, 183, 247
 Communal Rights, 104, 156, 224, 225
 Concert of Europe, 240
 Constantine, Roman Emperor, 11
 Constantinople, 12, 30, 31, 239
 Cossacks, 152, 172, 201
 Cracow, 42, 51, 52, 53
 Crimea, 9, 10, 11, 19, 79, 81, 228-245
 Crimean War, 14, 235, 237-245

 Dacia (Roumania), 39
 Dnieper River, 57, 60, 67, 69
 Dniester River, 31, 36
 Don River, 76, 179-181
 Douma, 141, 155, 156
 Drivers, 28, 74, 109, 117, 208
 Droschky, 28, 74, 117, 145, 190, 205
 Dvornik (Concierge), 92

 Easter, ceremonies, 20, 21-27
 Ekaterinoslav, 159, 260
 Elbruz, Mount, 99, 147, 149
 Emperors: Constantine, 11
 — Napoleon, 46, 51, 117-123
 — Trajan, 11
 Empress Catherine, 14, 183, 247, 248, 251
 England, 14, 16, 159
 English, 14, 16, 86, 159, 208, 215, 237, 260
 Entente, Triple, 15
 Essentuki (Caucasia), 148, 149

- Eupatoria, Crimea, 238
 Europe, Concert of, 240

 Factories, Cotton, 48, 214
 — Sugar, 226
 Fair, Palm Sunday, Moscow, 116, 117
 Football, 69
 Funeral, 85-88

 Galatz (Roumania), 38, 40, 41
 Galicia, Poland, 42, 48, 52-55
 Gate, Baidar (Crimea), 13, 233
 — Iberian (Moscow), 117
 — Spasskia (Moscow), 115
 Georgia, 151
 Genoese, 12, 13, 244
 German, 14, 15, 19, 48, 160, 169, 170, 171, 202, 248
 — in Russia, 29, 169, 204, 246-256
Goeben, cruiser, 68, 241
 Grande Armée, 51, 121, 124
 Greeks, 12, 81, 238
 — classic, 10, 21, 78
 Guns in the Kremlin, Napoleon's, 51, 123

 Hanover, 268
 Helika (Kertch Inscriptions), 78
 Hellas, 9, 80
 Hermes (Kertch Inscriptions), 80
 Herzegovina, 253
 Homer, 9
 Hospital, Red Cross, 184-188

 Iberian Gate, Moscow, 117
 Ice Field, Azoff, 72
 Icon, 19, 23
 Iconostasis, 20
 Inkerman, 11, 13, 241, 242
 Irkutsk, 16
 Ironworks, near Mariupol, 74
 Irtish River, 215
 Israelites, 45
 Ivan III, 5
 — the Terrible, 5, 6, 114, 115

 Japan, 154, 252
 Japanese, 46
 — War, 37, 153, 168, 253
 Jardin de Saxe, Warsaw, 43
 Jews, Warsaw, 45
 — South Russian, 154

 Kalisch, 202, 259, 263
 Kalmucks, 190-201, 248
 Kama River, 193
 Kasbek, Mount, Caucasus, 150
 Kertch, Crimea, 11, 73, 78-89
 Kharkoff, 112, 158, 217, 224, 227
 Kherson, 67, 69, 70, 71
 Kieff, 4, 56-66, 158
 Kinel (Samara Province), 213
 Kings: Augustus (Poland), 170, 171
 — Charles XII (Sweden), 170-173
 — John Sobieski (Poland), 50
 — Victor Emanuel (Sardinia), 14
 Kirghis Tribes, 198, 200
 Kischeneff, Bessarabia, 217, 220

- Kislovodsk, Caucasus, 148, 149
 Kostroma, 6, 7
 Kreml at Astrachan, 194
 Kremlin, Moscow, 115, 119
 — Guns in the, 51, 123
 Kuban, 134, 140, 144, 182
 Kurgam, Zaskie (The Great),
 78
 Kurgams, burial mounds, 10, 79

 Lavra Monastery, Kieff, 56, 57,
 59, 61
 Lemberg or Lvoff, 42, 53-55,
 261
 Lights, Blessing of the, 22
 Limans (Odessa), 35-38
 Livadia, 99, 229, 230
 Lodz (Poland), 48

 Maikop, Caucasus, 136, 137,
 146
 Malakhoff, Sebastopol, 241
 Mariupol, Azoff, 71, 73, 74
 Maupertuis (Poitiers), 176-178
 Mazeppa, 172, 173
 Meals, rural, 89, 143, 164
 Michael Romanoff (Tsar) 6, 7, 8
 Miletus, Colonies of, 10, 135
 Military road (Georgian), 151
 Mineral Vody, Caucasus, 147,
 150
 Mithridates, Dominion of, 11
 Mobilisation, Austrian, 32, 261
 — German, 265, 266, 268
 — Russian, 32, 260-263
 Monastery (Lavra), 56, 57, 59,
 61
 Mongols', invasion, 5

 Monks, Anthony and Theodo-
 sius (Founders of Lavra), 58
 Moscow, 4, 5, 6, 7, 48, 112,
 114-125, 196, 202
 Motor diligence, in Crimea,
 231-236
 Moujik (peasant), 102, 104,
 111, 157, 220, 224
 Mounds, burial, 10, 79
 Mountains : Ararat, 152
 — Crimean, 9, 232-234
 — Elbruz, 99, 147, 149
 — Kasbek and Caucasus, 150,
 151
 — Ural, 193, 214

 Nakhitchewan, Rostoff-on-
 Don, 183
 Napoleon I, 46, 51, 117-123
 Narzan, spring, 149
 National Anthem, 229, 255
 Navigation : Azoff, 71, 75, 135,
 179-181
 — Dnieper, 57, 60, 67, 69
 — Don, 179-181
 — Volga, 194, 208-211
 Nicholas, St., 19
 Nicholas II (Tsar), 18, 42, 158,
 160, 169, 229, 231, 266
 Nicolaieff, 67, 68, 70, 71, 229
 Northmen, 4, 5
 Novgorod the Great, 4
 Novorossisk, 75, 76, 77, 82,
 83, 127-135, 155, 257
 — " Republic of," 155

 Odessa, 14, 21, 24, 28-38, 40,
 70, 82, 112, 196, 250, 259

Odessa Cathedral (Sobor),
 21-27
 Officials, 159, 228, 264, 265
 Oreanda, Crimea, 230
 Orenburg, 213-216
 Orthodox churches, 16, 19, 20,
 44, 124, 174
 Palm Sunday Fair (Moscow),
 116, 117
 Pantacapeion (Kertch), 11
 Passports, 160, 161, 263
 Patriotism, 169, 250, 252, 253
 Pensa, 222, 224
 Persian carpets, etc., 135, 182
 — costumes, 195
 — at Astrachan, 194, 195
 Peter the Great, 8, 9, 118, 122,
 171-176, 194, 251 [251
 Petrograd, 4, 8, 112, 169, 213,
 Philarete (Theodore Roman-
 off), 6, 7
 Piatigorsk, Caucasus, 148
 Pilgrims at Kieff, 58, 60, 62, 66
 Poitiers and Maupertuis, 176-
 178
 Poland, 7, 42-55, 123, 263-265
 — churches, 45
 — factories, 47, 48
 — pictures, 49, 50
 Poles, 6, 42, 43, 59, 121, 265
 Police (gendarmes), 117, 150,
 163
 — permits, 158, 159, 263
 — regulations, 155, 163
 — talk, 219
 Poltava, 171-178
 Posen, 42, 48

Poti (Black Sea), 30
 Pruth River, 40
 Rasdelniya, "the point of
 separation," 95
 Red Cross, 185-189
 Red Square (Moscow), 114, 116
 Reni (Bessarabia), 40
 Regulations, Police, 155, 163
 "Republic of Novorossisk," 155
 Rights, Communal, 104, 156,
 224, 225
 Rivers: Dnieper, 57, 60, 67, 69
 — Dniester, 31, 36
 — Don, 76, 179-181
 — Irtish, 215
 — Kama, 193
 — Kuban, 134, 140-144, 182
 — Pruth, 40
 — Samarka, 207
 — Terek, 150
 — Vistula, 44, 49, 52
 — Volga, 180, 190-193, 202, 204,
 206, 207-211, 247, 248, 257
 Roman, Rome, 11, 80
 Romanoff, Imperial Family, 8,
 118
 — Theodore (Philarete), 6, 8
 — Michael, 6, 7, 8
 — Alexis, 115
 — Peter the Great, 8, 9, 118,
 122, 171-176, 194, 251
 — Alexander I, 121, 123
 — Alexander II, 221, 222
 — Nicholas II, 18, 42, 158,
 160, 169, 229, 231, 266
 Roosevelt, ex-President, 217,
 227

- Rostoff-on-Don, 135, 179-189,
 250, 258
 Roumania, 30, 39, 40
 Rurik the Northman, 5
 Ruthenians, 55

 Samovar, 34, 112, 143, 144
 Samara, 203, 204, 206, 207,
 213, 217
 Samarkand, 214
 Samarka River, 207, 213
 Saratoff, 196, 198, 210, 211
 Sebastopol, 13, 14, 16, 162,
 231, 232, 235, 236, 237, 238-
 245
 Servants, 166
 Servia, 32, 169, 258, 259
 Sheep-breeding, 219
 Siberia, 8, 85, 203, 213, 214
 Simeis (Crimea), 231
 Slavs, 43, 253, 256
 — ambitions, 43
 Snow-guards, 94, 95, 96
 Sobieski, John, King of Po-
 land, 50
 Spasskia Gate (Moscow), 115
 Squadron, Black Sea, 239, 241
Standart, Imperial yacht, 228,
 229, 230
 St. Basil's Church, Moscow,
 114
 — Clement, 11, 12, 19, 242
 — Nicholas, 19
 — Sophia (Kieff), 56, 63-65
 Steppe, 33, 37, 101
 Stolyopin, Prime Minister, 155
 Strikes, 154, 168, 169
 Sugar factories, 226

 Sultan of Turkey, 14
 Sunflower, 134, 140, 163
 Sweden, 7, 171
 Sysran, on the Volga, 218

 Taganrog, 179-181
 Tartars, 5, 13, 59, 81, 194, 200,
 221, 222, 231, 233
 — mosques, 194, 222, 231
 Taurida, 10
 Tcherkesses, 141, 142
 Terek River, 150
 Terem, Old Palace, Moscow,
 122
 Theodore Romanoff (Philar-
 ete), 6, 7
 Theodosia, 11, 12, 75, 76, 77, 84
 Theodosius (Founder of Lav-
 ra), 58
 Thorn (West Prussia), 265
 Tiflis, Georgia, 128, 151
 Touapse, Caucasia, 137, 138
 Trajan, Roman Emperor, 11
 Trajan's Wall, 39
 Transylvania, 39
 Tribes, Kirghis, 198, 200
 Triple Entente, 15
 Troika, three-horse carriage,
 117
 Troubles, Years of the, 154, 169
 Tsaritsyn, 190, 248
 Tsar Ivan the Terrible, 5, 6,
 114, 115
 — Michael, 6, 7, 8
 — Alexis, 115
 — Peter the Great, 8, 9, 118,
 122, 171-176, 194, 251
 — Alexander I, 121, 123

- Tsar Alexander II, 221, 222
- Nicholas II, 18, 42, 158, 160, 169, 229, 231, 266
- Turkey, Sultan of, 14
- Turks, 13, 14, 37, 40, 50, 59, 76, 81, 151, 152, 238, 240
- Ultimatums, 32, 169, 250, 267
- Uniforms, 128, 159, 161, 162, 260, 269
- Ural Mountains, 193, 214
- Venetians, 12, 13
- Vine growing, Caucasia, 131
- — Crimea, 99
- Vistula River, 44, 49, 52
- Vladikavkaz, 149, 150, 151
- Vladimir, 4
- Vladivostock, 154
- Vorontsoff, Prince, 231
- road (Crimea), 13, 231, 233
- Volga River, 180, 190-193, 202, 204, 206, 207, 216, 247, 248, 257
- bridge, 209, 217, 218
- floods, 191
- landings, 190, 194, 210
- navigation, 194, 208-211
- passenger boats, 191, 194, 257
- rafts, 208, 210
- Volga timber barges, 209
- Waldemar, Prince of Denmark, 7
- Wall, Trajan's (Bessarabia), 39
- War, Balkan, 30, 62
- Crimean, 14, 235, 237-245
- Great Northern (1700-1709), 170
- Japanese, 37, 153, 168, 253
- Outbreak of, 268-271
- Russo-Turkish, 40
- Warsaw, City, 42, 43-51, 53, 259, 263
- pictures, 49, 50
- Weddings, 166, 167
- Wheat fields, 101, 102, 140, 174, 197, 200, 202-216, 225, 226
- Wood, Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn, 237, 243
- Yalta, Crimea, 13, 99, 128, 228-231, 244
- Years of the Troubles, 154, 169
- Yenikale (Kertch), 81
- Zaskie Kurgam (Kertch), 78
- Zemstvoes (County Councils), 155, 156

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